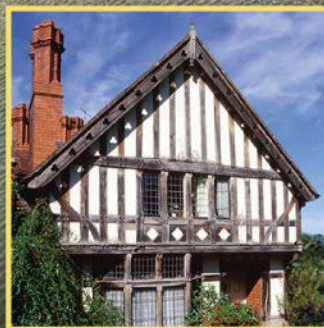
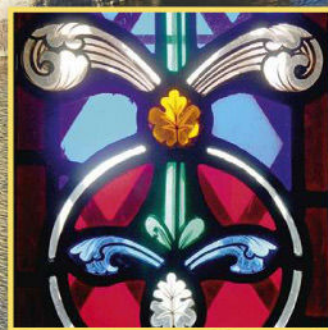
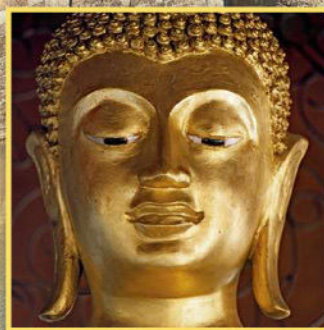


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Welcome to the *BBC History Magazine History Explorer*, your guide to enjoying history **on day trips in the UK - and on overseas breaks** too.

In this special issue, you'll find inspiration for **fantastic heritage visits in Britain** this year, from Ruthven Barracks in the Scottish Highlands to Tintagel Castle in Cornwall. You'll **discover thousands of years of Britain's past**, with features on some of the key events and places that shaped the country's history, from the Norman invasion to the rise of industry in the 18th century. You'll also find out **how people lived in the past**, by exploring a Bronze Age settlement in East Anglia and visiting the palatial home of Queen Victoria on the Isle of Wight.

If you're venturing further afield, we've got a dozen history holidays to choose from - all **fascinating destinations abroad**, from Berlin to Bali and from Corfu to Cartagena de Indias. Each place has been recommended by a historian who loves to indulge his or her passion for history while taking some time out - and our experts share their advice on what to see and do when you get there. If you like to **explore heritage on holiday**, and whether you're looking for a city break, an island in the sun or an exotic long-haul trip, **you'll find something here to enjoy**.

BBC History Magazine History Explorer is a compilation of articles that have appeared previously in *BBC History Magazine*. I hope you enjoy it. Do also check out our monthly magazine, which has regular features on exploring history, at home and abroad.

Rob Attar

Editor

BSME Editor of the Year 2015, Special Interest Brand



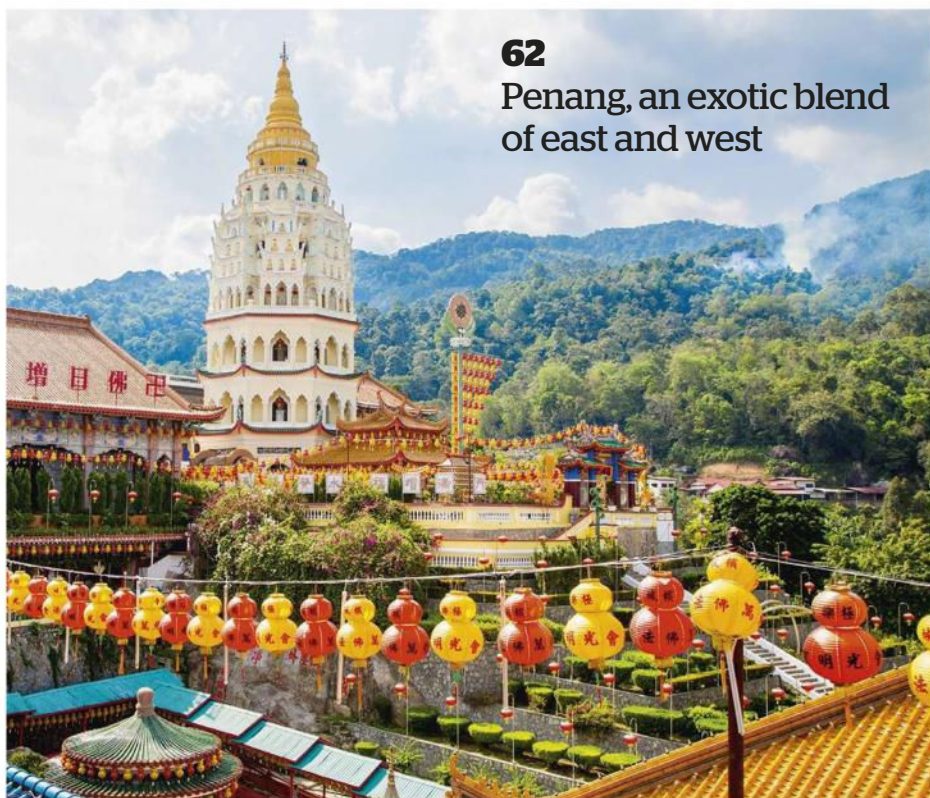
"In 1832, aged just 13, **Princess Victoria visited Beaumaris. She was greeted with much excitement** and a festival was held at the castle in her honour"

Historian **JANE RIDLEY** visits places connected with Victoria, page 13

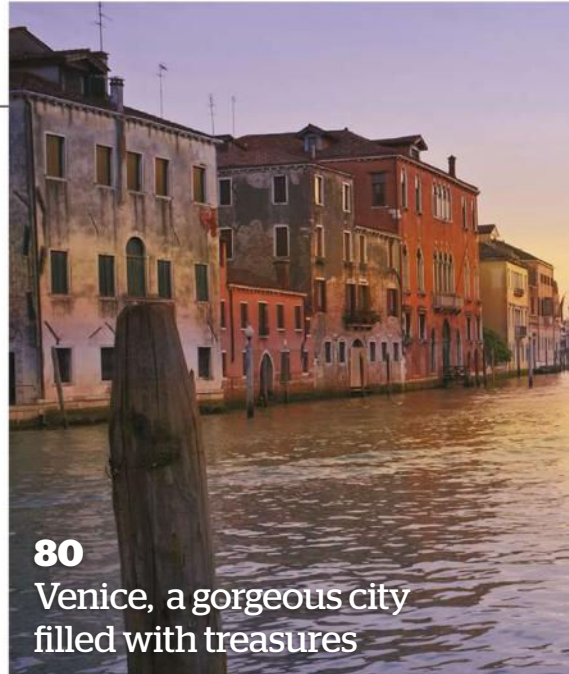
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Fountains Abbey,
a romantic ruin

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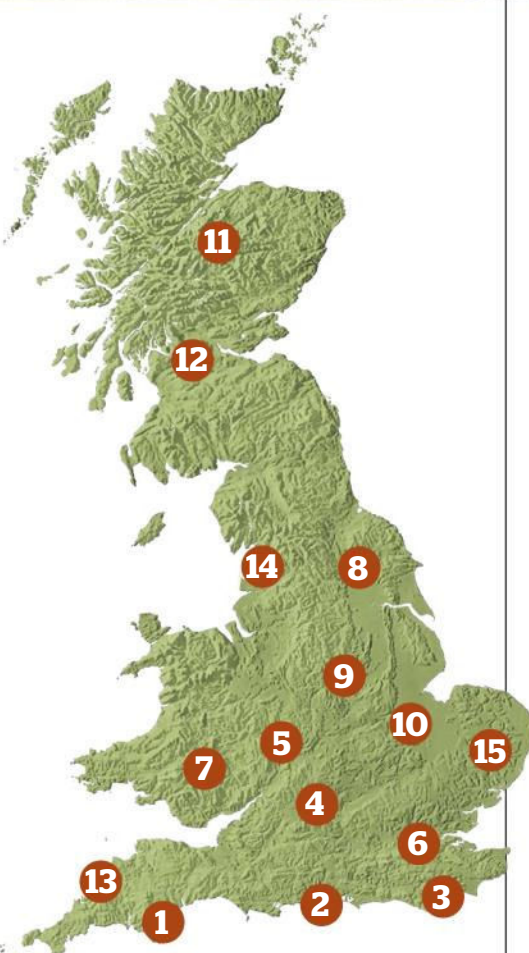
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1

Africans in Tudor and Stuart Britain

During the 16th century privateers brought hundreds of Africans to ports like Bristol and Plymouth. Miranda Kaufmann visits the **Golden Hind in Brixham** to tell the story of Diego, loyal servant to Francis Drake

After knighting Francis Drake in 1581, Queen Elizabeth commanded that the *Golden Hind*, the ship in which he had circumnavigated the globe – the first Englishman to do so – be lodged in a dock in Deptford as “a monument to all posterity of that famous and worthy exploit”.

Drake’s ship was broken up a century later, but the replica docked in the pretty Devon harbour of Brixham transported me, with a creak of timber and a whiff of salt and tar, back to the world of those Elizabethan sea dogs. Drake’s story, of course, has been told many times. What is far less well known is the story of the Africans who sailed aboard the *Golden Hind*.

Drake’s voyage was not merely a feat of navigation. He and his crew returned home rich with treasure plundered from the Spanish – so much, in fact, that investors in the voyage doubled their money. Drake’s privateering escapades inevitably led to encounters with Africans – as over 300,000 were transported across the Atlantic in bondage, largely by the Portuguese and Spanish, between 1502 and 1619. Drake himself had been involved in his cousin John Hawkins’s attempts to get in on this lucrative business in the 1560s.

But Drake would also have encountered Africans in England, where a growing black presence was a notable side-effect of the war with Spain. During the 16th century, privateers brought hundreds of Africans to ports such as Bristol and Plymouth following smash-and-grab raids on Spanish ships.

In the three years following the 1588 battle against the Spanish Armada, more than 200 privateering voyages were launched. In 1590, 135 Africans were brought to Bristol aboard just one privateering ship.

The voyage of the *Golden Hind* tells this tale in microcosm. Not only did at least three Africans join the ship during its epic journey, but one – Diego – was already on board when Drake set sail from Plymouth on 15 November 1577.

Diego was a Cimarron, one of the Africans who had escaped their Spanish captors to found their own settlements in Panama. The Cimarrons played an important role in Drake’s story: in the 1570s, they formed an alliance with the English privateer as he launched a series of raids on the Spanish in central America. It was during this campaign that Drake and Diego’s paths first crossed, as Diego acted as the principal point of contact between the English and the Cimarrons, who in April 1573 jointly captured over 150,000 pesos of Spanish silver and gold.

There’s little doubt that Drake held Diego in high regard. The Englishman named Fort Diego, built on an island in the Gulf of San Blas off Panama, after his ally. And there’s every chance that the ornate Drake Jewel (pictured on page 8), a gift from Queen Elizabeth dominated by the image of a black African united with the face of an Englishwoman, symbolises the alliance between England and the Cimarrons.

After this adventure, Diego returned to England with Drake. He may have lived at Drake’s house in Plymouth, or even accompanied his master on campaign in Ireland. What we know for sure is that, in



JENI NOTT



“Descend into the bowels of the ship and you really get a feel for the African Diego’s life aboard the *Golden Hind*”

MIRANDA KAUFMANN

Historian and writer Miranda Kaufmann prepares to board the replica *Golden Hind* in Brixham harbour. Francis Drake’s crew included several Africans during his voyages

Photography by Jeni Nott



This replica of the *Golden Hind* has been docked in Brixham harbour since 1964

1577, he joined Drake on his famous voyage circumnavigating the globe.

Entering 'Drake's cabin' aboard the replica *Golden Hind*, you can imagine Diego hovering on the threshold in his role as Drake's personal manservant. He would have prepared his master's clothing, served his meals, run errands for him and used his fluent English and Spanish to interpret the words of captive Spaniards.

But descend a flight of steps into the bowels of the ship and you really get a feel for Diego's life aboard the *Golden Hind* – or, rather, his death. Walk past the crew's cramped sleeping quarters and you'll come to the barber surgeon's cabin, equipped with a gruesome array of medical instruments. Poor Diego would probably have become all too familiar with these during his final days.

Diego was with Drake in November 1578 when 'Indians' ambushed his landing party on the island of Mocha, off the coast of Chile. Diego was hit by an arrow. The wound wasn't immediately fatal, but it became infected almost a year later, and he died of gangrene poisoning near the Moluccas, now the Maluku Islands, Indonesia.

Medical aid would have been minimal. By

"THE SURGEON'S CABIN IS EQUIPPED WITH A GRUESOME ARRAY OF MEDICAL INSTRUMENTS WITH WHICH DIEGO WOULD HAVE BECOME ALL TOO FAMILIAR"

the time Drake had rounded the tip of South America, the *Golden Hind's* chief surgeon was dead and another had been left behind on sister ship the *Elizabeth*. There was, "none left us but a boy, whose good will was more than any skill he had," recorded Francis Fletcher, the chaplain on the voyage. That Diego survived his initial injury was ascribed to the grace of God and "the very good advice of our General" [Drake]. Perhaps Drake remembered how, 10 years earlier, his cousin John Hawkins had used a clove of garlic to treat an arrow wound in Cape Verde. The captain would certainly have done his utmost to keep this useful crew member alive.

The same care was not evident in Drake's treatment of Maria, an African woman taken from a Spanish ship captured off the Nicaraguan coast on 4 April 1579. Drake's former steward and sworn enemy, William Legge, described Maria as a "proper negro wench" and reported that she "was afterward gotten with child between the captaine and his men pirates".

Drake had no children with either of his wives, and may have been impotent, so it is unlikely he was responsible for getting Maria pregnant. We will probably never know whether the father was one of Drake's crew, a Spaniard, Diego or one of two other African men who had joined the ship. What we do know is that on 12 December 1579 Maria was marooned, heavily pregnant, on Crab Island, Indonesia.

When John Drake, Francis's cousin, was examined by the Spanish Inquisition in 1584, he suggested that Maria had been left on the island, along with two African men, "to found a settlement", adding that they had been provided with rice, seeds and means of



The Drake Jewel, now in the V&A Museum



The barber surgeon's cabin shows crude, bloody methods of medical treatment

making a fire. However, he also admitted that there was no water on the island.

The story of the Africans aboard the *Golden Hind* sheds light on encounters that led to the arrival of black men and women in the British Isles in the 16th and 17th centuries. Setting foot on the replica, we, too, enter the world of the privateers. When we disembark, we are in a sense following in the footsteps of more than 360 Africans known to have been living in Britain between 1500 and 1640. As they arrived, they inhaled air that an English court ruled in 1569 was "too pure an air for slaves to breathe in". They were free. **H**

Dr Miranda Kaufmann is a historian with a special interest in Africans in 16th and 17th-century Britain mirandakaufmann.com

ON THE PODCAST

Listen to Miranda Kaufmann discuss the arrival of Africans in 16th-century Britain
► historyextra.com/bbchistory magazine/podcasts

REX/JEN NOTT

AFRICANS IN TUDOR AND STUART BRITAIN: FIVE MORE TO EXPLORE



The Golden Hind



The Quay, Brixham, Devon TQ5 8AW

● goldenhind.co.uk

1 Castle Cornet, Guernsey

● museums.gov.gg

James Chappell, African servant to Christopher Hatton (1632–1706), saved the lives of the viscount and his small daughters when lightning set fire to the powder magazine at this large island fort in 1672. After the explosion, which killed Hatton's wife and mother, the household moved to Kirby Hall, Northamptonshire.

The fact that Chappell's second wife was Mercy Peach, daughter of the licensee of the Hatton Arms in Gretton, lends some credence to the local legend that Chappell himself eventually became landlord there. More certain is that Hatton's will of 1695 specified a bequest of £20 a year for the rest of Chappell's life. You can explore the fort's 800-year history at the Story of Castle Cornet Museum.



Castle Cornet has guarded the harbour of St Peter Port for eight centuries

2 Stirling Castle

● stirlingcastle.gov.uk

Peter the More, a courtier of James IV of Scotland (1473–1513), was one of at least five Africans present at the Scottish royal court in the early years of the 16th century, and in 1504 was provided with a horse and lodging at Stirling. It's known that Africans also lived at Stirling with Mary of Guise, second wife of James V, around 1549. You can take a guided tour of the castle to find out more about characters such as Guise – and some of the magnificent royal buildings that they inhabited.



The Golden Hind, Brixham



3 Knole, near Sevenoaks

● nationaltrust.org.uk/knole/

Between 1613 and 1624, "John Morockoe, a Blackamoor" worked in the kitchen and scullery of Richard Sackville, 3rd Earl of Dorset, while "Grace Robinson, a Blackamoor" was one of the laundry maids. One of England's largest country houses, Knole dates from the 15th century and was more recently birthplace of the writer Vita Sackville-West (1892–1962).

4 St Dunstan and All Saints, Stepney, London

● www.stdunstanstepney.com

This east London church was the site of the first three known marriages between Africans in Britain. In July 1608 "Peter & Mary both nigers" are recorded in the marriage register. The following February, the church was the venue for the wedding of "John Mens of Ratclif a niger & Luce Pluatt a niger", and in September 1610, "Salomon Cowrder of Popler a niger sailer & Katheren Castilliano a niger also" were married here. Salomon is one of a handful of Africans known to have worked as sailors during Stuart times.



St Dunstan and All Saints, Stepney dates back to at least the 10th century

5 Mary Rose Museum, Portsmouth

● maryrose.org

Black diver Jacques Francis was part of the salvage team hired by Henry VIII to recover goods from the wreck of the *Mary Rose* between 1545 and 1549. Born on Arguin Island off the coast of Mauritania in c1528, he had come to Southampton with an Italian merchant. His Venetian master, Piero Paulo Corsi, was accused by the merchant Domenico Erizzo of stealing salvaged goods from the wreck of the *Sancta Maria* and *Sanctus Edwardus*. In 1548 Francis gave evidence in the resulting court case before the High Court of the Admiralty, which accepted his description of himself as a servant, not a slave. You can see the ship to which Francis dived – and many of the artefacts that went to the bottom with it – in the recently renovated Mary Rose Museum.



JENI NOTT



“Queen Elizabeth I
commanded that the
Golden Hind be lodged
in a dock in Deptford
‘as a monument to all
posterity of that famous
and worthy exploit’”

MIRANDA KAUFMANN

The *Golden Hind* replica. The original ship no longer exists – having been broken up in the 17th century

2

Victoria and Albert

Professor Jane Ridley and Charlotte Hodgman visit **Osborne** on the Isle of Wight, a former royal residence that offers a fascinating insight into the private lives of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert

It is impossible to imagine a prettier spot,” said Queen Victoria of Osborne, the palatial family home where she and Prince Albert chose to periodically retreat from the public eye to spend quality time together, and raise their children.

Tucked away on the Isle of Wight, just an hour’s ferry journey from Southampton, Osborne commands impressive panoramic views of the Solent, a prospect that is said to have reminded Albert of the Bay of Naples. The sprawling 342-acre site was purchased in 1845, with building contractor Thomas Cubitt commissioned to create a family home that could function at both a domestic and court level. By 1851, most of the house had been completed, with a central pavilion block housing the royal family’s private apartments (completed in 1846).

“Osborne was very much Albert’s pet project,” says Jane Ridley, professor of modern history at the University of Buckingham, “and he was heavily involved with its design from the outset. By 1846, when the family began visiting Osborne, Victoria had already given birth to five children in six years. This rapidly expanding royal nursery needed somewhere it could, albeit rather self-consciously, come and be a family.”

A queen on show

While Osborne’s exterior, built in an Italian ‘palazzo’ style, cannot fail to impress, it’s the interior that reveals the most about the tastes and relationship of the royal couple – from the way the house was run, to the image they wished to convey to the wider world.



Franz Winterhalter's portrait of the royal family places Albert in a dominant role

The gold drawing room, with its marble columns, full-length mirrors and cut-glass chandeliers, tells of a queen on show. Visiting royalty were received in its sumptuous surroundings, and Victoria would have retired here after dinner to read, play cards, sing or perform on the piano. Next door, in the formal dining room, family portraits adorn the walls – a reminder, if any were required, of Victoria’s place as the ‘Grandmother of Europe’.

One painting in particular sums up the image of domestic monarchy that Albert, in particular, wished to project to the world: Franz Winterhalter’s 1846 portrait of the royal family (shown below), which hangs at the far end of the room. Victoria, dressed formally and wearing a crown, as befits her status, has been painted slightly in the background. Instead, it is Albert who is the dominant figure, leaning towards his son and heir, as founder of the dynasty, while other children play around him.

“Albert had very strong ideas as to how the royal family should be brought up,” says Ridley, “and he was keen that the new dynasty distance itself from the scandals of the regency that had preceded it. Neither Victoria, nor Albert, had enjoyed conventional or happy childhoods. Yet there they were, with nine children of their

own, desperately trying to project an image of being the perfect family and be an example for everyone else to follow. It was no easy task.”

Victoria and Albert were first cousins but had had little contact as children. Although they had met briefly at celebrations for Victoria’s 17th birthday in 1836 – an encounter that had impressed

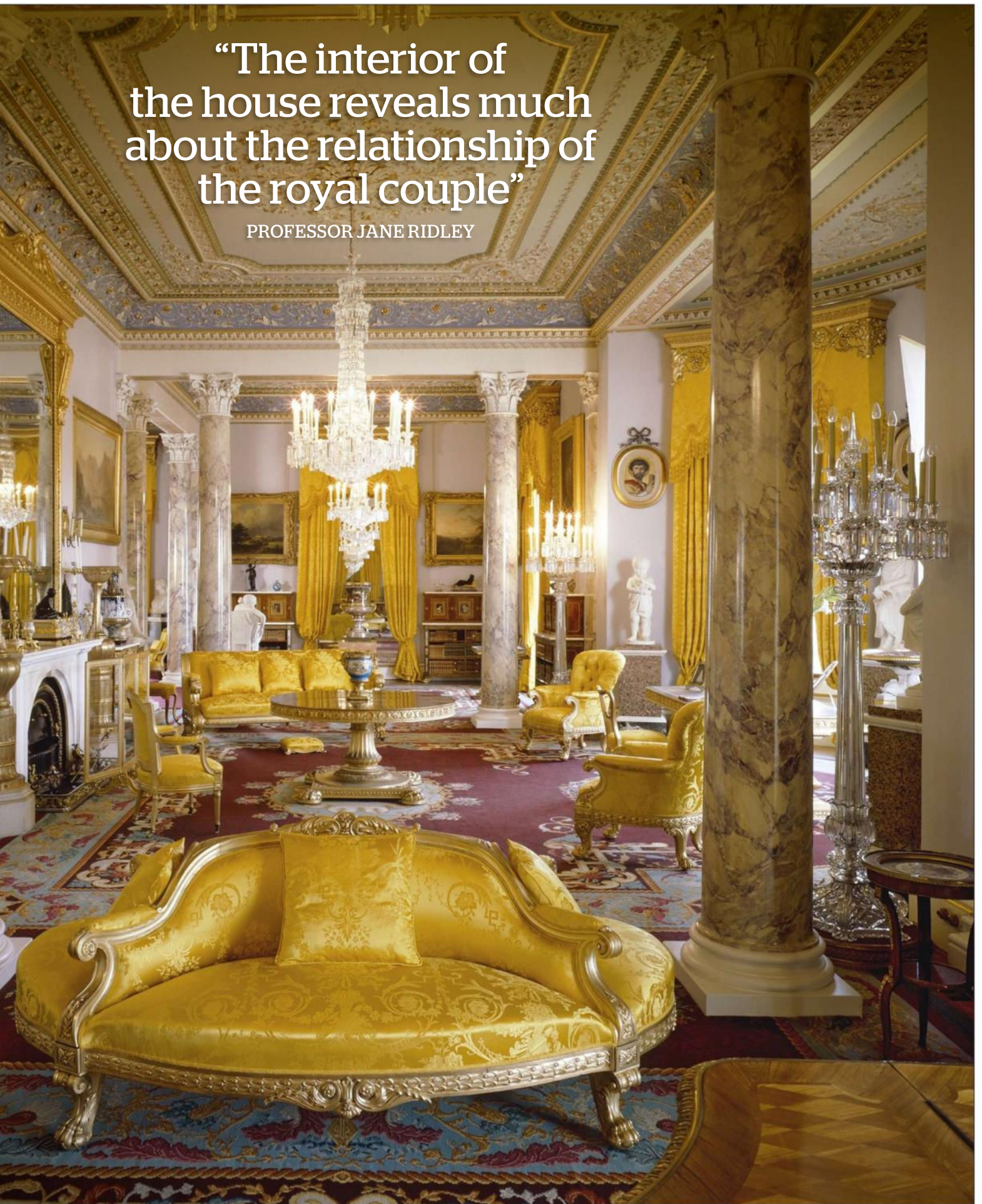


The richly decorated drawing room at Osborne was restored in 2003 to reflect its appearance in the 1890s. The cut-glass chandeliers were wired for electricity in 1893

ALAMY/ENGLISH HERITAGE

“The interior of
the house reveals much
about the relationship of
the royal couple”

PROFESSOR JANE RIDLEY





Queen Victoria's original bathing machine can be found on the private beach at Osborne, a popular site for the royal family

neither party – it was during Albert's trip to England in 1839 that Victoria fell for the German prince. After meeting Albert at Windsor Castle, dishevelled and windswept after his long journey to England, the young queen was instantly smitten. "It was with some emotion that I beheld Albert – who is *beautiful*," she wrote in her diary.

As a child, Victoria's life had been controlled by her overbearing, power-hungry mother. Forced to sleep in her mother's room and with virtually no freedom, Victoria, on her accession to the throne in 1837, was wary of diluting the power she had gained through queenship by marrying. Albert, too, had experienced an unhappy childhood, brought up in virtual seclusion with his older brother Ernest in Coburg after his mother was banished from court for adultery.

But despite her initial reservations – and perhaps deciding that marriage was preferable to remaining with her mother – Victoria proposed to Albert five days after their second meeting. The pair were married at St James's Palace on 10 February 1840.

"Albert and Victoria's relationship was complicated," says Ridley. "Albert's initial status as a relatively low-standing German prince – and one with little money at that – meant that he was very much the poor relation. But Albert wasn't particularly interested in titles and status – his ambition was for real power and a chance to rule.

"Victoria feelings about her husband's ambitions were

conflicted. On the one hand she adored Albert, recognising him as her intellectual superior, and encouraging his ideas. But she also had an incredibly strong sense of her own hereditary right. She wanted to share power with Albert, but didn't want to give it up completely."

The dilemma was resolved in the short term when Victoria fell pregnant within months of her wedding, going on to have seven of her nine children in 10 years. With the queen pregnant or recovering from birth for most of that time, power had to be transferred to Albert.

"Albert had strong opinions about how the country should be run," says Ridley. "His ideas about constitutional monarchy were less about creating a monarchy that was limited and controlled by parliament, and more about creating a system whereby he would be in complete control of the whole agenda of the cabinet, with Victoria acting as the official mouthpiece for his ideas."

Royal relationship

Albert's status is evident when, walking up the grand staircase, visitors are greeted by an arresting life-size statue of the prince consort in Classical armour. Meanwhile, a huge fresco at the head of the stairs depicts Neptune handing his watery empire to Britannia. Impressive though these public declarations of Victorian power are, it is in Victoria and Albert's private apartments – just off the first-floor landing – that the nature of their relationship is most apparent.

The four rooms are small, simple and relatively self-contained. The sitting room boasts some of the best views across the Solent the house has to offer. According to Victoria's journal she and Albert would stand on the balcony to watch the moonlight shining on the water and listen to the nightingales singing in the trees below.

During the day, the royal couple would sit side by side at two desks, working through the



Abdul Karim, 1888, wearing the striped turban that Victoria decreed should be worn at dinner

"IT IS THE IMAGE OF THE TWO DESKS, PLACED SIDE BY SIDE, THAT ENCAPSULATES THE NATURE OF VICTORIA AND ALBERT'S MONARCHY"

VISIT

Osborne, Isle of Wight



York Avenue, East Cowes, PO32 6JX

● english-heritage.org.uk

many red boxes of correspondence that regularly arrived from London. The smaller, left-hand desk, still cluttered with photo frames and trinkets, was Victoria's. "These items," says Ridley, "were swept angrily to the floor when the queen was in a temper. But it is the image of the two desks, placed side by side, that encapsulates the nature of Victoria and Albert's monarchy."

Albert's fascination with new technology is apparent throughout Osborne – from the use of fireproof construction, to the plumbed-in bath, lavatory and shower that can be seen in Albert's bathroom. His progressive ideas are also present elsewhere, most notably in the prefabricated Swiss cottage, which was erected in the grounds and fitted with child-sized furniture and a fully-working kitchen, complete with



ENGLISH HERITAGE/ALAMY



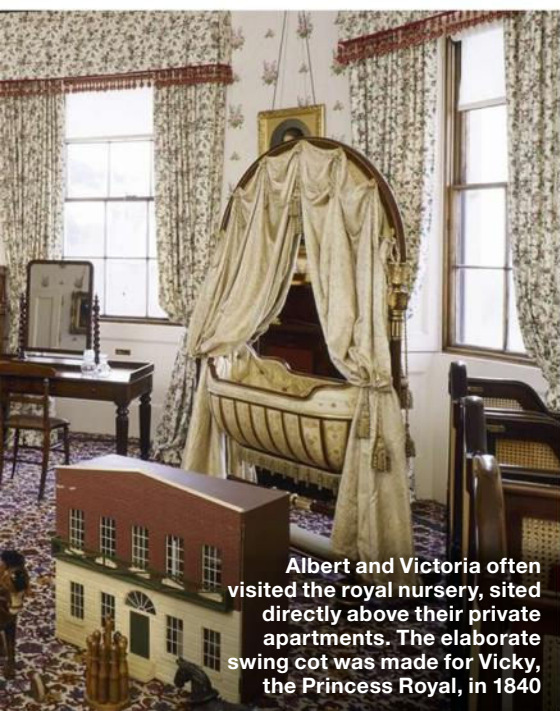
Albert was heavily involved in the landscaping of Osborne's grounds, directing gardeners from the tower shown here

state-of-the-art equipment. Here, the royal children learnt to cook, preparing meals for their parents, and tending to the vegetables in their own little garden.

Monarchy in mourning

Victoria was utterly devastated when Albert died in December 1861 and sank into a deep depression. Albert's bathroom and dressing room were kept almost exactly as they had been during his life. Hot water for shaving was brought up on a daily basis and the queen kept his dressing gown in bed with her as she slept, surrounding herself with various pieces of memorabilia as constant reminders of her beloved husband.

ENGLISH HERITAGE



Albert and Victoria often visited the royal nursery, sited directly above their private apartments. The elaborate swing cot was made for Vicky, the Princess Royal, in 1840

VICTORIA AND ALBERT: FIVE MORE PLACES TO EXPLORE

1 Kensington Palace LONDON Where a princess became queen

Victoria was born at Kensington in 1819 and grew up there under the watchful eye of her mother and her father's former equerry, John Conroy, a man the young princess despised. On 20 June 1837 Victoria was visited at the palace by the archbishop of Canterbury who informed her that she was queen. hrp.org.uk/KensingtonPalace

2 Beaumaris Castle

ISLE OF ANGLESEY

Where Victoria was greeted with joy

In August 1832, 13-year-old Victoria, then Princess of Wales, visited Beaumaris as part of a tour of England and Wales. Despite an outbreak of cholera in the town, Victoria was greeted with much excitement and a festival of literature, music and performance was held at the castle in her honour. beaumaris.com

3 Windsor Castle WINDSOR

Where Victoria and Albert honeymooned

Still an official royal residence, Windsor Castle is the largest and oldest-occupied castle in the world. It was here, in 1839, that Victoria and Albert had their significant second meeting, and where they spent a three-day honeymoon after a whirlwind romance. The royal couple are buried in the Royal Mausoleum built nearby at Frogmore. royalcollection.org.uk

4 Buckingham Palace LONDON Where the royal family set up home

Victoria was the first monarch to use Buckingham Palace as the official royal residence and moved into the building in 1837. Today's front wing of the palace was added in the 1840s to accommodate Victoria and Albert's rapidly expanding family. royalcollection.org.uk

5 Balmoral Castle

ABERDEENSHIRE

Where the queen mourned in private

Balmoral was a popular base for the royal family and was described by Victoria as "my dear paradise in the Highlands". The scenery is said to have reminded Albert of his home country. The queen spent much of her time here after his death, often in the company of her Highland servant, John Brown. balmoralcastle.com

"As Albert's lifeless body was interred in the vault at Windsor, a grief-stricken Victoria fled to Osborne where she remained for several months," says Ridley. "For the first 10 years after Albert's death, the queen refused to appear at any social or public function, instead choosing to remain in seclusion at Osborne, Windsor or Balmoral."

At first it was deemed appropriate for the queen to withdraw, but by 1871 Victoria's persistent invisibility had thrown the monarchy into a crisis, and the beginnings of a republican movement were starting to surface. But grief suited Victoria to a degree, allowing her the privacy she craved, and an excuse to avoid the public appearances she found so nerve-racking. "She stubbornly refused to change her behaviour," says Ridley, "and it was only when the Prince of Wales [the future Edward VII] fell seriously ill that the tide turned in favour of the royal family once more."

Trusted friendships

Victoria never remarried after Albert's death, and was incredibly lonely. Two noteworthy friendships she formed in widowhood did much to revive her low spirits but unfortunately caused friction within her immediate family. One highly documented relationship was with Highlander John Brown, with his gruff manner and lack of deference, he took the queen riding in the hills around Balmoral but was hated by the royal children. Similarly, Victoria's Indian servant Abdul Karim – whose portrait (shown left) hangs in the Durbar Wing – was resented for his close relationship with the queen.

Osborne was an integral part of the queen's life until her death at the age of 81. In fact, it was in her bedroom here that she breathed her last – not, as Ridley puts it, "in the bed she had shared with her beloved Albert but in a small bed in the middle of the room, surrounded by her family."

For all that, Osborne remains a permanent snapshot of the private lives of one of Britain's most formidable royal couples. **H**



Historical advisor: Professor Jane Ridley (left), historian and broadcaster. Jane's most recent book is *Victoria* (Penguin Monarchs, 2015)
Words: Charlotte Hodgman

3

The interwar holiday revolution

Kathryn Ferry visits **Hastings and St Leonards** in East Sussex, where 1930s sun worshippers could enjoy a fashionable, but thrifty, summer holiday

The British seaside was at its most glamorous during the interwar years. Art Deco railway posters sold a vision of the coast that was drenched in light and vivid with colour, evoking French Riviera style, Hollywood movie sets, Modernism and mass sun worship.

The De la Warr Pavilion at Bexhill-on-Sea is well known but, five miles east, the promenade between Hastings and St Leonards tells its own story about fashions in leisure and architecture. From the massive liner-like apartment block of Marine Court to Britain's first underground car park, its interwar gems are still there to be found.

The £3m redevelopment of Hastings seafront was masterminded by borough engineer Sidney Little (1885–1961) whose love of the era's wonder material earned him the title 'concrete king'. Before Little's arrival in 1926 the roads were poor, sanitation was inadequate and visitor numbers were in decline. A decade later, politician Leslie Hore-Belisha was so impressed with Hastings he declared it was "in the forefront of all other seaside towns".

Competition within the domestic holiday market was intense but Hastings managed something unique in its response to the huge challenge posed by the motor car. Between 1914 and 1930 motor vehicle numbers had risen from a mere 140,000 to 1.5 million. By 1939 there were 3 million, of which 2 million were private cars. Summer weekends were already distinguished by coastward traffic jams and resorts were struggling to meet the demand for parking. As Hore-Belisha told assembled dignitaries in 1936: "Every single day since I became

minister of transport [in 1934] there has been a net addition of 500 cars to the road."

To ease traffic flow along Hastings seafront, Sidney Little reclaimed a strip of land from the top of the beach in which he built a new sea wall, the promenade and a wider road. This left a gap between the old and new sea defences into which Little proposed to insert a subterranean car park. Completed in 1931, it was the first of its kind to be built under civic auspices anywhere in the world. There are not many car parks that can be recommended for their aesthetic qualities, but the Carlisle Parade example is a mini masterpiece of 1930s design. Its sequence of shallow, squared-off arches converges to give a cinematic quality that is perfectly in tune with the era.

Cars did not revolutionise the seaside simply because of the space they took up. They were evidence of an increasingly affluent middle class that took the annual summer holiday for granted. The habit of taking a week off was spreading among workers more generally throughout the decade, and after the Holidays with Pay Act of 1938 some 15 million people were eligible. As HB Brenan put it in *The Architectural Review*: "Before the war many villagers in central England had never seen the sea. Today, members of a Women's Institute in a Cotswold village... will visit Aberystwyth one year and Bournemouth the next as unconcernedly as 30 years ago they would have gone picnicking."

In the past, destinations were dictated by rail routes but cars, coaches and motorbikes opened up wider possibilities. And, critically, if a resort did not live up to its guidebook hype, holidaymakers could go somewhere else, not next year but next day.

This pressure drove a massive investment



A woman with short brown hair and glasses, wearing a bright green dress and a light green jacket, is sitting on a dark brown wooden bench. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The bench is positioned under a large, arched structure made of colorful, mosaic-like tiles in shades of blue, green, and brown. In the background, a white building with many windows is visible, and a street with cars can be seen to the left. The sky is overcast.

“The promenade between Hastings and St Leonards tells its own story about fashions in leisure”

KATHRYN FERRY

Kathryn Ferry enjoys the sea air from one of Sidney Little's concrete shelters on Hastings promenade. The town was a magnet for 1930s holidaymakers in search of Hollywood-style glamour

Photography by James Clarke



Sidney Little's double-decker promenade included a covered walkway, known as 'Bottle Alley', that was decorated with pieces of bottle glass salvaged from a rubbish tip

in up-to-date attractions, foremost of which was the open-air swimming pool or lido. Despite the obvious abundance of water at the seaside, no self-respecting resort could afford to be without one.

The St Leonards Bathing Pool, designed by Little, opened in 1933. Its vast D-shaped arena had the look of a concrete amphitheatre with raked seating for 2,500 spectators and a curved deck for sunbathing. It was uncompromisingly 'modern'; the perfect place to show off your new streamlined bathing costume. And its 330x90ft pool was nearly as big as Blackpool's. At a cost of £60,000, it put Hastings in the same league as bigger northern resorts.

But the love of lidos proved short-lived and Little spectacularly over-estimated visitor demand. The pool is therefore one of the lost elements of his grand plan, as is the contemporary block of 90 beach chalets built next door. These were flat-roofed to allow for sunbathing and like the lido were built with integral garaging. So unadorned were they in their concrete simplicity, they must have seemed an astonishing incursion amid the town's Victorian terraces.

Thankfully the double-decker promenade that has connected Hastings with St Leonards since 1934 retains most of its original elements. The concrete may be

showing signs of age but it's still easy to imagine young women sauntering along its length dressed in the beach pyjamas made fashionable by socialites holidaying at Juan-les-Pins. When the sun was out they could traverse the pink and yellow chequer-board paving of the top deck, stopping to rest in one of Sidney Little's distinctive modern shelters. In less clement weather they could take the covered lower deck, known as Bottle Alley because of the bottle glass Little salvaged from a local rubbish tip and embedded in the rear wall for decoration.

You can still enjoy a run of 'sun-trap shelters' as the promenade continues above the shingle beach at St Leonards, but the real star here is Marine Court (pictured on page 19), a 'liner on land' docked as a permanent reminder of the interwar fashion for cruising.

Few people could afford to set sail for their holidays but if the seaside was the everyman's escape, part of its remit was to give a sense of what it might be like to live a different life. Buildings designed to imitate ocean liners were a feature of several resorts and 1930s holiday camps but the scale of Marine Court is exceptional. At 14 storeys high it was the tallest residential building in Britain when it opened in 1937 and, just in case its debt to the *Queen Mary* was not self-evident, Cunard-White Star Line lent a 24ft-long model of

"IF THE SEASIDE WAS THE EVERYMAN'S ESCAPE, PART OF ITS REMIT WAS TO GIVE A SENSE OF WHAT IT MIGHT BE LIKE TO LIVE A DIFFERENT LIFE"



The underground car park in Hastings was the first of its kind anywhere in the world



Little's love of modern designs like this shelter earned him the title 'concrete king'

their latest vessel to be displayed inside.

With its steel-framed construction, rooftop sun parlour and dramatic silhouette Marine Court cost more than £400,000 to build. Though it was nothing to do with Sidney Little, its construction showed just what an impact the borough engineer's changes had made to perceptions of the resort as a fashionable place. The town declined after the Second World War but in recent years there has been a revival in its fortunes, and these structures are at last on the way back to their 1930s heyday. **H**

Kathryn Ferry is a historian and writer who specialises in architecture, design and seaside culture. kathrynferry.co.uk

ON THE PODCAST

Kathryn Ferry discusses seaside holidays, from Hastings beach, on our podcast ► historyextra.com/bbchistory/magazine/podcasts

THE INTERWAR HOLIDAY REVOLUTION: FIVE MORE PLACES TO EXPLORE



Hastings and St Leonards



East Sussex

● visit1066country.com

1 Midland Hotel, Morecambe

● midlandhotel.org

When the London, Midland and Scottish Railway decided to replace its two existing Morecambe hotels in 1933, it employed the best designers of the day. Architect Oliver Hill responded to the curve of the promenade with a streamlined building three storeys high. Its central circular tower contains the entrance and an elegant spiral staircase above which is the ceiling medallion of Neptune and Triton by Eric Gill. Other decorative works by Gill also survive and can be enjoyed if you choose to stay at the restored hotel or just take afternoon tea in its circular cafe.



The spiral staircase at the Midland Hotel with its original ceiling medallion

2 Rothesay Pavilion, Argyll and Bute

● argyll-bute.gov.uk

The fashion for sunbathing began in the 1920s, famously championed by designer Coco Chanel. The influence of this trend on architecture was profound, with long rows of glazing and flat roofs for sunbathing, typical of International Modernism. In 1938 Scotland got in on the act with James Carrick's Rothesay Pavilion, designed to give Glasgow holidaymakers a taste of this glamorous style and offering a range of attractions with a dance hall at its centre.

The pavilion remains open today but has yet to be restored to its former glory.



3 Labworth Restaurant, Canvey Island

● thelabworth.com

Canvey Island was first developed for tourism by the Victorians, but really grew in popularity during the early 20th century when many of London's eastenders chose to holiday at the resort. Its contribution to seaside Modernism is the Labworth Restaurant, designed to look like the bridge of an ocean liner, by Anglo-Danish engineer Ove Arup. Rescued from dereliction in 1998, it still operates as a restaurant.

4 Tinside Lido, Plymouth

● visitplymouth.co.uk

What better way to recreate the feel of the 1930s seaside than with a trip to the lido? Few coastal examples survive but the 1935 pool jutting into Plymouth Sound was restored in 2003 and is now open for public swimming between June and September. In its heyday visitors could enjoy floodlit bathing accompanied by an orchestra, but even if that's no longer possible the turquoise pool remains an impressive sight when viewed from the contemporary sun terrace of Tinside Colonnade.



Holidaymakers still enjoy the turquoise waters of Tinside Lido today

5 Saltdean, East Sussex

● visitbrighton.com

The Brighton suburb of Saltdean experienced significant development during the 1930s reflecting the seaside's increasing popularity as a permanent home for commuters using the new electric trains to London. Not only does Saltdean have some fine examples of interwar housing, in a range of styles from Tudoresque to Spanish, Italian and Cubist, it also boasts one of the best lidos of the period, due to re-open in 2016 following refurbishment. Its architect, RWH Jones, also designed the 426-bedroom Ocean Hotel, now converted to apartments.



Lidos like the one in Saltdean were the height of fashion for 1930s holidaymakers

EUROPE

Languedoc, France



by Sean McGlynn

Discover 'William the Heretic' wine as Sean McGlynn hails a region dominated by vineyards and an equally intoxicating medieval past

Castles and crusaders, cathedrals and heretics – Languedoc is a medievalist's dream destination. Add to the mix the snow-capped mountains, sweeping valleys, stunning vistas and regional cuisine, it makes for a perfect holiday, too.

Languedoc is a region of south-western France bordering the Pyrenees and the Mediterranean. I visited the area for the first time in 2013 while researching my book on the early 13th-century Albigenian Crusade launched against the area's Cathar heretics. The book's title, *Kill Them All*, reflects the widespread, shocking savagery and destruction of this episode.

The crusade began in earnest at Béziers. On the very first day, thousands of its townspeople were massacred by the crusaders for not handing over the Cathars who lived among them. Hence the infamous (and largely genuine) order of "Kill them all! God will know his own." It is chilling to stand in the medieval church of Sainte Madeleine on the same site that witnessed the epicentre of the slaughter. The town still

sheds blood today with its famous Féria bull-fighting festival held every August.

Béziers is a fascinating town where the lengthy boulevard, cafes, bookshops and elegant 19th-century buildings lie close to crumbling tenements. Here, the Midi Canal, one of the most impressive feats of 17th-century engineering, crosses the 800ft-long Orb Aqueduct, as it links the Atlantic to the Mediterranean.

From there, a train or car journey to the crusaders' next target at Carcassonne takes you through a landscape utterly dominated by never-ending vineyards. It promotes a real sense of continuity: now, as in the Middle Ages, these vines declare the wealth and importance of wine-making to the region. No wonder the

medieval chronicles repeatedly tell of vines belonging to the enemy being constantly destroyed. Everywhere you have the opportunity to taste local wines with such suitably historic names as William the Heretic.

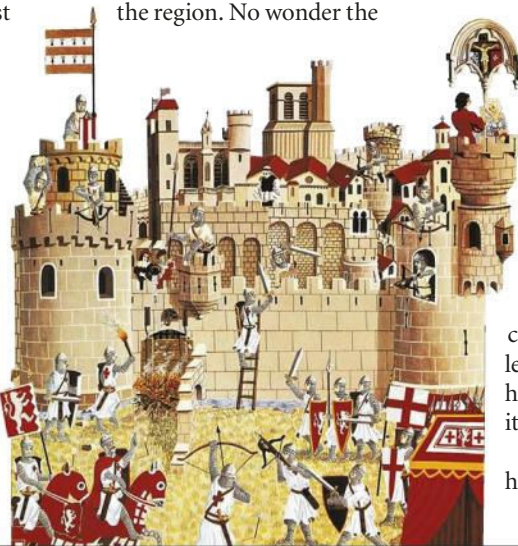
Carcassonne itself is arguably the most famous medieval city in Europe. Criticisms of its 19th-century renovations are overdone and cannot detract from the impact of its sheer scale when you first set eyes on it. To walk along its crowded streets in the shadow of over 50 barbicans and towers is to immerse yourself in a medieval world. It was here that the crusaders and the Inquisition set up their headquarters. The basilica is home to what many believed to be the tombstone depiction of the most famous crusader, Simon de Montfort.

The fortified old city is undoubtedly the jewel in Carcassonne's crown, but neglect the nearby newer town at your peril. Here you will find some of the best examples of the regional dish: cassoulet. This slow-cooked rich casserole of goose or duck leg, pork sausage and haricot beans is as filling as it is delicious.

Don't worry – you will have ample opportunity to

burn it all off as you clamber up the steep and narrow paths of numerous small mountains to visit the glory of Languedoc: its spectacular castles. Vertiginous, precipitous and built into the rock, these incredible fortresses dominate the human landscape on the northern edge of the Pyrenees.

Termes, Peyrepertuse, Puilaurens, Quéribus and the four castles perched side-by-side at Lastours are powerful and inaccessible structures. They appear impervious to military threat, yet all fell to northern French control in the end.



An illumination shows a crusader army assaulting Béziers in 1209



ALAMY/BRIDGEMAN

“Everywhere you have the opportunity to taste local wines, with such names as William the Heretic

ADVICE FOR TRAVELLERS

BEST TIME TO GO

July–August sees a host of festivals and ferias take place in the region, but be warned, it can get very busy. Many other events take place at various points during the year, including a medieval festival in Sommieres, in April.

GETTING THERE

Languedoc is served by five regional airports: Nîmes, Montpellier, Carcassonne, Perpignan and Béziers, all of which can be reached by a number of UK airports.

WHAT TO PACK

A sturdy pair of walking boots and possibly a hiking stick. Also a hat to prevent sunburn – as I discovered to my cost at nearly 4,000ft on the snow-capped Montségur.

WHAT TO BRING BACK

The obvious answer is a bottle of wine – though, in a region utterly dominated by vineyards, you may find the choice overwhelming!

READERS' VIEWS

Visited Carcassonne and nearby towns inc Narbonne. Steeped in history, delicious food, friendly people
@gnarlyoldtree

Been at old Carcassonne long time ago; impressive city walls
@krujik_m

Lots of pretty villages and castles about
@BrownsAccounts



The medieval city of Carcassonne boasts more than 50 towers and barbicans, as well as the possible tombstone of crusader Simon de Montfort

Nearby Montségur saw the last stand of the Cathars in 1244. This most famous castle is the least prepossessing of them all. But it did not have to be: built at nearly 4,000ft, it let geography defend it (hence the name, which means ‘safe mountain’). In fact, it took a 10-month siege to defeat it, after which more than 200 Cathars were seized and burned alive.

But in Languedoc the smaller-scale can be equally impressive and evocative. A particular highlight is the quiet, isolated mountain village of Montailhou. Its Inquisition

records are brought to life in the eponymous bestseller, which lays bare the everyday lives of peasants and heretics. Here you can feel, in the cliché, that you are really stepping back in time. The same is true of the cave complex at Grotte de Niaux, where you can walk into the bowels of the mountains to view prehistoric cave paintings.

The region of Languedoc attracts not just historically minded tourists but ufologists, cultists and mystics. Believers in the Mayan apocalypse of 2012 gathered at Pech de Bugarach mountain waiting to be saved by

aliens; unfortunately they were disappointed on both accounts.

At a guesthouse believed to be the birthplace of the last Cathar perfect (minister), a coven of white witches offered to cure me of my sunburn. Their proposal only made my face turn even redder. **H**

Sean McGlynn is author of *Kill Them All* (Spellmount, 2015)

Read more about Sean's experiences in Languedoc at historyextra.com/bbchistorymagazine/languedoc

EUROPE

Plovdiv, Bulgaria



by **Dominic Sandbrook**

Widely known as one of the world's oldest cities, Dominic shares his memories of an oft-forgotten Bulgarian gem with a long and colourful history

My first impression of Plovdiv, the second largest city in Bulgaria, was not terribly promising. A few hours earlier, my travelling companions and I had crossed the Turkish border in an inter-city bus.

It was shortly before dawn when the bus jerked to a halt and the driver shouted: "Plovdiv! English! Plovdiv!" Nobody else got off the vehicle: just us. As the bus rolled away, we saw that we were at the entrance to an underpass, dark and forbidding. As we trudged through the puddles, a dog howled somewhere in the night.

Once we were through the damp underpass, however, things started to look up. As darkness became daylight, the city revealed itself. Plovdiv is not merely one of the oldest cities on the planet; it is, I think, one of the most handsome, most characterful and most interesting.

The first settlement on the banks of the river Maritsa on the upper Thracian plain dates from the Neolithic era. As a Thracian, Greek and Roman city, it was known first as Philippopolis, after Philip of Macedon, and then Trimontium, the city of three hills. It stood on the most

important military route in the Balkans: Lucian called it "the largest and most beautiful of all cities". And today, as part of the European Union, it is the biggest city before you get to the Turkish border. To visitors from the west that gives it a pleasingly exotic feel, though the locals would not be happy to hear you say so.

Although the city boasts some 200 archaeological sites, there is no doubt as to which is the best. The wonderfully preserved Roman amphitheatre, which dates from the reign of the Emperor Trajan (reigned 98–117 AD), is probably the finest classical ruin in all Bulgaria. Uncovered by accident in 1972 following a freak landslide, the structure

originally held around 7,000 people, and even today it hosts concerts and competitions.

On my first visit, in 1997, signs proudly proclaimed that the city was hosting an International Folk Dancing Competition. My friends and I duly bought tickets and installed ourselves on the same stone benches where Roman bigwigs once sat to watch the entertainments of their day.

The crowd were splendidly partisan, showering abuse on the Greek and Serbian efforts, but warmly applauding their Macedonian cousins. The Latvian entry, curiously, featured a pantomime cow, which did terrible damage to the makeshift wooden stage. Even as it capered gaily around, Bulgarian officials were scuttling onto stage to clear stray bits of wood.

If a trip to the city's amphitheatre whets your appetite for more ancient history, you could always head to the ruins of Eumolpias, situated on a hill in the old town. The remains of the Thracian settlement date from 5000 BC and the views over Plovdiv are worth the climb.

During the medieval era, Plovdiv regularly changed hands from Byzantium to Bulgaria and back again. But in 1364 it fell to the Turks, who occupied it until



A drachma from the reign of Philip II, the Macedonian king who inspired the town's first name: Philippopolis



1878. During the 19th century, the city became the heart of the Bulgarian National Revival, a movement that once captured the hearts of do-gooders like William Gladstone, but is now little remembered in Britain.

Indeed, Plovdiv's old town is a jewel of 19th-century Bulgarian Revival architecture. Its tiny, winding cobbled alleys, closed to traffic, are lined with wooden houses, their upper storeys jutting out in retro-medieval style and their facades painted bright red, yellow, orange and blue. It is of course a terrible cliché, but as you stroll through

ALAMY/ROBERT HARDING

“Plovdiv’s old town is a jewel of 19th-century Bulgarian Revival architecture

ADVICE FOR TRAVELLERS

BEST TIME TO GO

Summers are hot and dry, with an average temperature of 28°C, while winter can see temperatures of -6°C. May–October is the best time to visit. The Verdi festival of opera takes place in the Roman amphitheatre in June.

GETTING THERE

Ryanair (ryanair.com) flies direct to Plovdiv three times a week from London Stansted airport. Alternatively, Sofia airport is about one hour 40 minutes from Plovdiv by road.

WHAT TO PACK

On my first visit I found that wearing a knock-off Bulgarian football shirt made social interactions go a lot more smoothly.

WHAT TO BRING BACK

I returned with a suitcase full of what appeared to be genuine Bulgarian Communist memorabilia. Only when I got home did I notice the words ‘Made in China’.

READERS’ VIEWS

Had a few days there on a working holiday – loved it. Beautiful, friendly, cheap, oozing history. What more could you want?

@HistoryWoman1

Worth visiting. Archaeological sites, Roman and Ottoman remnants carefully preserved, museums, cultural activities, big lively town. A must.

Doris Giselle Stricker

The view over Plovdiv from the Roman fortress on Nebet Hill, close to the Thracian remains of Eumolpias. Plovdiv is one of the world’s oldest settlements

the old town, it is hard to banish the feeling that you have wandered into a Balkan folk tale.

For some mysterious reason, Bulgaria is sometimes described as a rather drab place. In fact, it could hardly be more colourful, while I think its people are comfortably the friendliest in the Balkans. The city’s synagogue, which was built in 1886–7, is a striking reminder of their decency and good sense. During the Second World War, the local Orthodox Metropolitan, Cyril, worked hard to save the city’s 1,500 Jews from the Holocaust. Indeed,

Bulgaria has the distinction of being the only Axis ally which did not kill or deport a single member of its Jewish population. Alas, today the synagogue is little used, most of the city’s Jews having left after the war for Israel. But it stands as a very visible reminder that not everybody succumbed to Hitler’s lust for destruction.

Plovdiv gets few western visitors. When people do come, they often use it merely as a base for visiting the nearby Bachkovo Monastery, a glorious medieval mixture of Byzantine and Bulgarian traditions. For me,

though, the real joy lies in soaking up the atmosphere of a city almost untouched by western tourism. From the first taste of the local plum brandy to the sight of a pantomime cow destroying a Roman amphitheatre, Plovdiv is not a city you will quickly forget. **H**

Dominic Sandbrook’s book *The Great British Dream Factory* (Allen Lane) was published in 2015

Read more about Dominic’s experiences in Plovdiv at historyextra.com/bbchistorymagazine/plovdiv



EUROPE

Avaldsnes, Norway



by **Robert Low**

Filled with unforgettable Norse beauty and history, Robert Low shares his love of Avaldsnes, once a seat of power for Viking kings and a site that today retains much of its 10th-century atmosphere

There is a moment, just as you come up through the car park, with the solid stone squares of St Olav's Church on your left, when your breath is taken away by the view. It's an unspoilt long sweeping slope down to the sparkling sea of a typical Norwegian fjord of bleak beauty, where the gulls shatter a pewter sky with cries akin to those of lost children.

This is Avaldsnes on the west coast of Norway, seat of Norway's Viking kings and a powerhouse of politics and warriors in the time when I would most like to have visited it – the 10th century. It is an era that Norwegians still treat with reverence.

Today, the area's history is celebrated at the Nordvegen History Centre, an ultra-modern and high-tech facility that is mostly based underground, so that it does not mar the

landscape. Visitors descend by a spiralled sweep of stairs, and a walk through the centre is like a dip into a dark, mysterious world, taking in some 3,500 years of history.

It is almost a relief to emerge, blinking, into the light of the gift shop and cafe.

A replica Viking farm is located about a 10-minute walk from the history centre – Avaldsnes is, after all, where King Harald Fairhair, the man who unified Norway into the first true Viking kingdom, sited his main farm and royal settlement in c870. Today, the place is accessible via a short, narrow stretch of footbridge across to the island of Karmøy.

The word 'farm' makes

the settlement seem a cosy proposition, but there is nothing cosy about the beautifully constructed and maintained buildings, hand-crafted in the authentic style. The boatshed is huge and there is also an 82ft longhouse, a lovingly reconstructed oven for bread, a forge, a shrine to the gods... and all of it used by people who have learned the necessary skills. I am sometimes one of those re-enacting Vikings you'll see cooking, making bread and forging metal for days at a time, getting ready for the annual

festival which takes place in June. The event is a highlight of the year, attracting thousands of Norwegian visitors as well as tourists from overseas.

Avaldsnes was the seat of royal power in Norway for generations. The name was originally Ogvaldsnes, derived from King Augvald, a semi-legendary ruler whose daughters fought by his side as shield maidens and who had a sacred cow he believed provided the magic milk that secured his victories.

Later, King Olaf Trygvason sat on the throne here and forced out the last of the old Norse gods in favour of Christianity.

Proof of that is the stone St Olav's Church, built in the 13th century by King Hakon Hakonsson on the site of other, older structures.

A view of the 13th-century St Olav's Church at Avaldsnes, an area that was the seat of Norway's Viking kings



King Olaf Trygvason takes on a sea-ogress in this 14th-century illumination from the *Flateyjarbok*

BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY/TORE THIS FIELD

ADVICE FOR TRAVELLERS

BEST TIME TO GO

The highlight of the year is the Viking Festival, which takes place in June and is not to be missed. Remember, though, that this is the north: summers can be scorching hot but they can also get windy and damp, so be warned. Winter is not the time to be anywhere near a Norwegian fjord, unless of course, you like the grandeur of ice and snow.

The annual summer solstice is celebrated in Avaldsnes with concerts, seminars, pilgrim wanderings and a midsummer service at the historic St Olav's Church.

GETTING THERE

If you're feeling brave, you could opt for the 25-hour road trip across the Channel to Belgium and Holland, up to Denmark and across from there. Flying is the easier option. Haugesund airport is just over three miles from Avaldsnes – you can fly there direct from London Stansted.

WHAT TO PACK

Good quality waterproofs and suntan lotion – and a taste for tasty seafood. It is a Norwegian speciality.

WHAT TO BRING BACK

A sense of having touched something from the past.

WHAT TO SEE NEARBY

Haugesund is famous for its international film and jazz festivals. You can stay in a lighthouse, or a fisherman's cabin on the coast and enjoy waterfalls and white, sandy beaches.



Go to Avaldsnes, stand next to St Olav's and look out onto the windswept grandeur of the island and sea

Next to it is a huge standing-stone obelisk, once one of several that surrounded the church. Legend has it that the stone is a sewing needle dropped from heaven by the Virgin Mary. Another legend, older and darker, says that the obelisk is the magician who built the church in a night. Tricked by the priest out of his promised payment, he was turned to stone just as he rushed to destroy vengefully what he had built.

At 24ft high, the obelisk is Norway's second tallest; no one knows how deep into the ground it goes. It leans sideways, almost touching the main building, and it isn't hard to see that magician, frozen to a stone needle, mere inches from falling on the church in a rage. Legend has it that if the needle ever actually

touches the church, the building will fall – and the world will end.

Someone clearly thought so. The top of the needle has been chiselled away in ancient times, preventing it touching the wall. It used to move a centimetre a year but has, mercifully for us all, now stopped at just a small distance from the church wall.

In the summer of 2010, the inheritors of the Vikings' skills gathered to build a ship – the largest and most authentic longship ever to be built since 1200. At 115ft long, 26ft wide and boasting some 70 tonnes of seasoned oak, it needs 100 people to row it. When the newly christened *Dragon Harald Fairhair* arrived in Avaldsnes some three years later, I was fortunate to be one of those crewing it. It is now on tour.

Sailing the boat was an unforgettable experience – but just the brilliant highlight to a gem of a place. If you really want to feel history up through the soles of your feet, go to Avaldsnes, stand next to St Olav's Church and look out onto the windswept grandeur of island and sea.

Once, perhaps a thousand years or more ago, a Norseman would have stood exactly there, wrapped in a wool cloak and drinking in the same beauty.

Robert Low is a journalist and novelist. His Oathsworn novels are set in the Viking age. robert-low.com

Read more about Robert's experiences in Avaldsnes at historyextra.com/bbchistorymagazine/avaldsnes

4

Capability Brown

On the 300th anniversary of Brown's birth, Nige Tassell and Dr Sarah Rutherford visit **Blenheim Palace** to reflect on the great landscape architect

It comes at you all of a sudden. One minute you're driving along an astonishingly pretty side-street in the Oxfordshire town of Woodstock, thinking – as you enter what seems to be just a shoppers' car-park – you've reached a dead-end. But then there's a grand archway, which offers one of the most extraordinary views in Britain – the majestic sweep of the grounds of Blenheim Palace, the vast country house that, as well as being the birthplace of Winston Churchill, is a designated Unesco World Heritage Site.

This stunning view is what we've come to recognise as quintessentially English – undulating grasslands framed by enchanting woodland and, at the park's epicentre, a Cotswold-stone bridge mirrored in the silver waters of a giant lake.

Blenheim Palace was designed by the architect John Vanbrugh at the dawn of the 18th century – the building conceived as a reward to John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough, for his military victories over the French. But the stunning grounds in which it sits was the product of one man's imagination: Lancelot 'Capability' Brown (1716–83).

The foremost landscape designer of the 18th century – or, indeed, any century – Brown was a self-made man, a Northumbrian whose services were called upon by kings, lords and prime ministers. A later duke of Marlborough was one such client, in 1763 commissioning Brown to reconfigure Blenheim. The project took 11 years.

"Brown lived in a time that was a maelstrom of

change and opportunity," explains garden historian Sarah Rutherford. As expected, Sarah proves to be an excellent guide not only to the delights of Blenheim's parkland, but also to what drove the man and his artistry. "He didn't have a university education, but he did have a multitude of talents that gradually blossomed and that he made the most of. He not only had a genius for landscape design and the artistic side of things, but he taught himself architecture, he understood engineering, he was an able businessman and he got on with his clients, the wealthiest in the land."

Influential friends

Brown's big break had been his appointment as head gardener at Stowe in Buckinghamshire in 1741, when he was only in his mid-twenties. It was a prestigious job; Stowe at the time was the greatest garden in the country. Not only did Lord Cobham charge Brown with landscaping and building work, but the company his employer kept proved crucial in accelerating his career. "He was

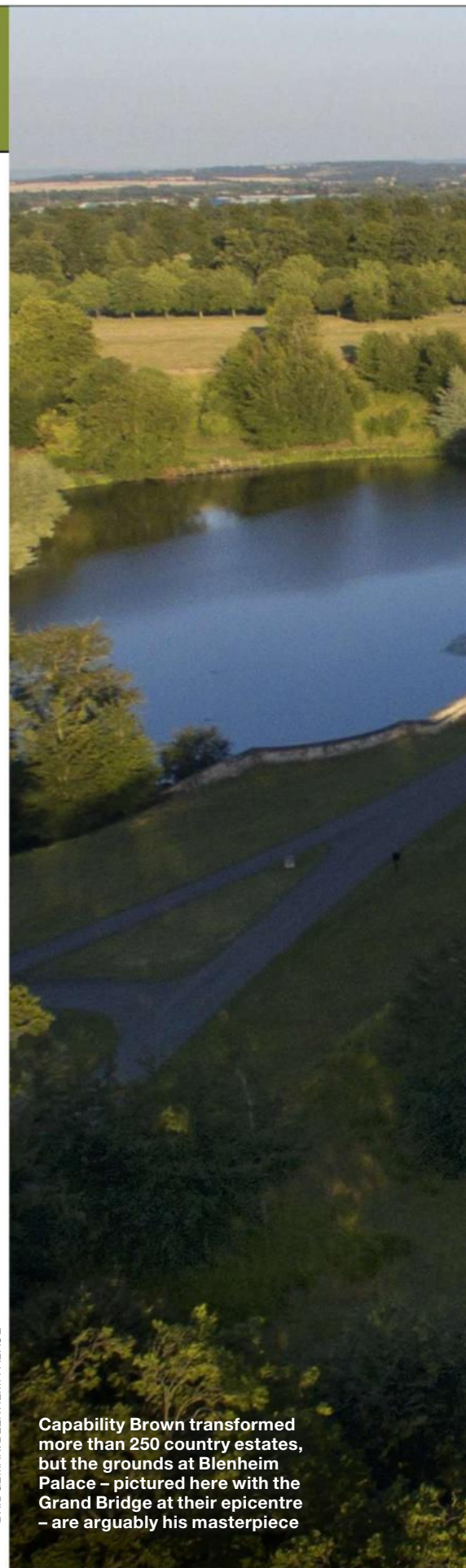
loaned out to Cobham's influential friends," explains Sarah. "Then, when Cobham died, Brown went out on his own. He never needed to advertise.

Everyone beat a path to his door. They would write him letters: 'Oh please come and see me, Mr Brown. Next time you're passing, I would very much value your opinion. Have a look at my grounds and see what you can do with them.'"

This reputation was bolstered by Brown's nickname. 'Capability' wasn't a reference to his own

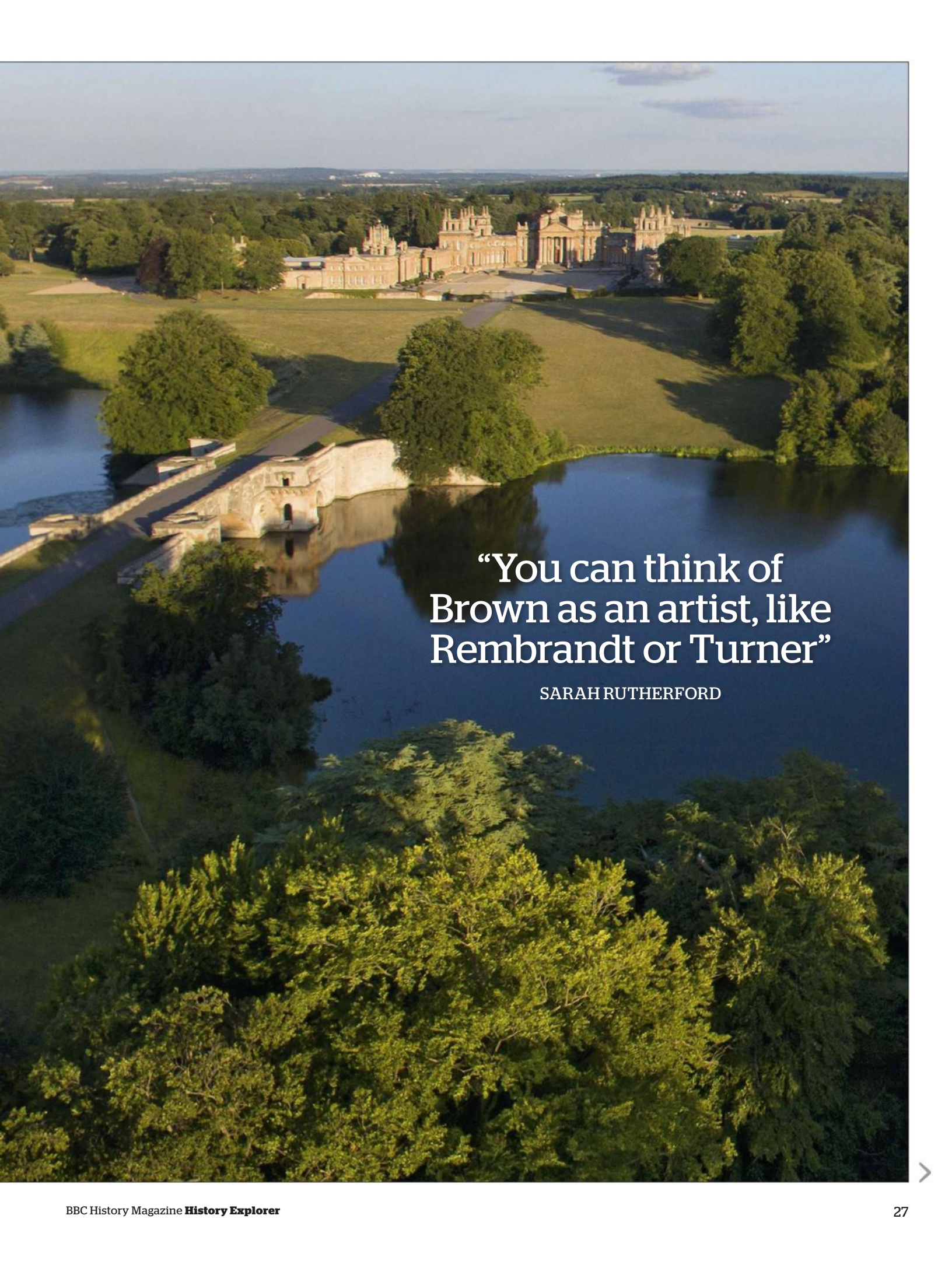


Capability Brown
designed gardens for kings,
lords and prime ministers



BRIDGEMAN/BLENHEIM PALACE

Capability Brown transformed more than 250 country estates, but the grounds at Blenheim Palace – pictured here with the Grand Bridge at their epicentre – are arguably his masterpiece



“You can think of
Brown as an artist, like
Rembrandt or Turner”

SARAH RUTHERFORD



A painting of Blenheim's grounds shortly after Brown had transformed them. "He used a very simple palette of water, grass and trees," says Sarah Rutherford

attributes; it alluded to the promise of a particular estate. "He was able to size up a site and say: 'This place has capabilities, my lord.' He could see the capabilities and how to make an artistic picture out of them. In today's terms, we'd probably more fittingly call him 'Potential' Brown."

Works of art

Gazing out across Blenheim's unblemished vista, it feels like you're looking at a landscape painting, one caught in time in oils or watercolour. "Brown was an artist," confirms Sarah. "You can think of him as being like Rembrandt or Turner. He used a very simple palette of water, grass and trees – as you see here – and turned it into something that looked almost natural. That was the key to it. His parks settle into the British landscape so beautifully that you can't tell what's natural and what's artificial."

So subtle are many of Brown's touches that it takes a garden historian to make my untrained eye aware of them. As we approach the northerly tip of Blenheim's lake, evidence of such subtlety is right before

us. "He put islands at the end of lakes," Sarah says, indicating a tiny archipelago of three islands below us, "to make you think that the water goes on forever. You can't see where it goes. You can't tell if it goes on for another 100 miles."

Not everything at Blenheim is Brown's work, though. He inherited the 50-year-old Grand Bridge and needed to accommodate it within his design. His solution was to greatly widen the trickling river Glyme by digging out a valley, flooding it and damming it; the lower storeys of the previously outsized bridge were deliberately submerged. All of this, of course, was done by hand in those pre-mechanised times. The effect was worth that titanic effort, the perfect sense of scale giving the illusion that the water has always been there and that the bridge is the newer addition to the landscape.

While Brown's designs weren't a million miles from those of his competitors, he dominated the market thanks to his contacts and connections. And thanks to thinking bigger. "He was country-wide while the others were rather more regional," says

Sarah. "He was criss-crossing the country on his horse the whole time. He was all over the place." Not that Brown was a ruthless businessman intent on crushing his competition. He barely viewed competitors as rivals. Often former employees of his, they would charge notably less. But, fortified by his formidable reputation, he wasn't bothered. "There were enough parks he didn't touch that others could Hoover up."

BRIDGEMAN/BLENHEIM PALACE

"BROWN'S PARKS SETTLE INTO THE LANDSCAPE SO BEAUTIFULLY THAT YOU CAN'T TELL WHAT'S NATURAL AND WHAT'S ARTIFICIAL"



VISIT

Blenheim Palace



Woodstock, Oxfordshire OX20 1PP

● blenheimpalace.com

Brown's concurrent contracts meant he not only had a great many people working for him, but that he was getting noticeably richer. In the 1760s, his busiest decade, he was turning over tens of thousands of pounds – millions and millions in today's money. And the spirit of oneupmanship displayed by landowners kept the contracts coming, as Sarah reveals. "Some would say: 'Do as you want. Just give me a landscape that my peers will be impressed with. I've got the money, you've got the taste. Get on with it.' Others would be more specific and not allow him free rein."

Wild woodlands

Brown's work wasn't just about aesthetics, though. They also needed to serve a range of functions, often those underwritten by economics. The provision of extensive grasslands provided hay as well as grazing for cattle, horses and sheep, while woodlands offered timber production and the breeding of pheasants for shooting.

The great artist always had a head for economics. "Brown was probably a businessman foremost. He had to make a living. He didn't come from a background where he had an automatic income. He was very astute and didn't want to live in a garret for his art. He wasn't one to show off the trappings of wealth. He just wanted to be secure. I've calculated that he might have left as much as the equivalent of £40m when he

died – unlike poor old Chippendale the furniture-maker whose household goods at the end of his life were worth £26!"

In 1764, George III appointed Brown royal gardener, tasking him with maintaining Hampton Court and St James's Palace. This also gave the workaholic landscape designer plenty of time to undertake his own projects (indeed, work had only started on Blenheim the year before). Brown made very few changes to Hampton Court. "He said it was out of respect for the design that was already there," Sarah notes. "Actually, it's because no one was paying him to."

Heading back to the palace, we pause for a while – along with several of the many dog-walkers enjoying the lunchtime sunshine – to take in the view from the Grand Bridge. Sarah shows me a reproduced original drawing of Brown's vision for the park, one sketched out at this exact spot, with the lake, the largest island, and Woodstock on the horizon. The scene now is almost exactly as Brown planned it more than 250 years ago.

"He would recognise Blenheim today without a doubt," she concludes. "It's pretty much as he envisaged it. After Brown's death, people said his work was too bland, too smooth, that things needed to be rougher. Of course, trends move on. But most of his parks still survive. They're very enduring. People didn't wipe them out. They still have them and they still love them." ■



Historical advisor: **Dr Sarah Rutherford** (left), author of *Capability Brown and His Landscape Gardens* (National Trust Books, 2016).

Words: Nige Tassell

Blenheim Palace is currently hosting a special Capability Brown exhibition (blenheimpalace.com)

CAPABILITY BROWN: FIVE MORE PLACES TO EXPLORE

1 Alnwick Castle

NORTHUMBERLAND

Where Brown deftly employed trees

Commissioned by the 1st Duke of Northumberland, Brown returned to his home county to reconfigure the land to the north of the castle as it rolled down towards the river Aln. He flattened the land and planted plenty of trees. These deliberately obscured a view of the castle until its finest aspect was revealed.

alnwickcastle.com

2 Harewood House

LEEDS

Where Brown reshaped 1,000 acres

Brown rarely designed the grounds of a just-built house. But shortly after Harewood House's final brick was laid in 1771, he embarked on one of his most impressive designs yet, reshaping 1,000 acres of the existing landscape into the gently sweeping sight it remains today.

harewood.org

3 Petworth House and Park

WEST SUSSEX

Where he shifted heaven and earth

The Petworth estate was a relatively early project for Brown, taken on by him in 1751, more than a decade before he started tackling Blenheim. Petworth was also a major project: 70,000 tonnes of soil and clay were moved in order to produce the perfectly undulating landscape. national-trust.org.uk/petworth-house-and-park

4 Weston Park

SHROPSHIRE

Where a lake was cunningly created

Weston Park is home to one of the five pleasure grounds Brown designed. It was commissioned by Sir Henry Bridgeman after he inherited the estate in 1764. One of the recently restored areas here – Temple Wood – showcases Brown's trademark talent with water, having dammed a stream to form a lake. weston-park.com

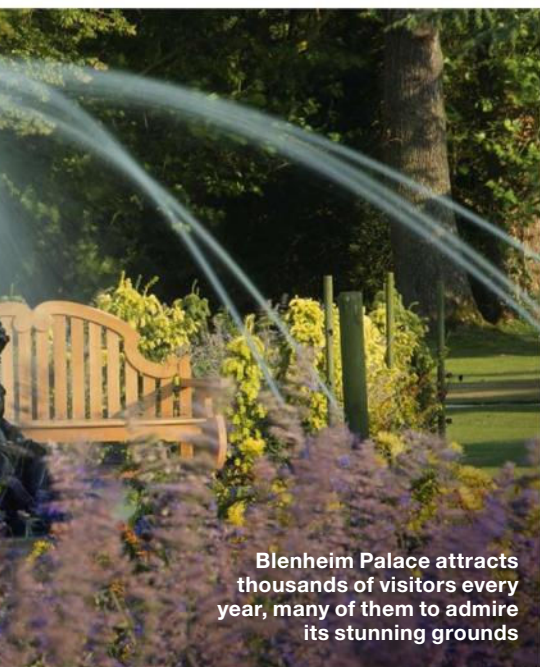
5 Wimpole Estate

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Where parkland dominates

Brown transformed the area of this estate known as North Park, dispensing with formality and creating open parkland. He also turned the sharp angles of two fishponds into serpentine lakes while digging a third. The combination gave the illusion of a river flowing through this part of the grounds.

nationaltrust.org.uk/wimpole-estate



Blenheim Palace attracts thousands of visitors every year, many of them to admire its stunning grounds

At the epicentre of Blenheim Palace's grounds you'll find an enchanting Cotswold-stone bridge, mirrored in the silver waters of a giant lake

“He would recognise Blenheim now. It's pretty much as he envisaged it... Most of his parks survive. They're very enduring”

SARAH RUTHERFORD

ALAMY



5

The gunpowder plot

Dr Clare Jackson visits **Coughton Court**, which played a key role in the conspiracy to blow up the Houses of Parliament in 1605

Despite its obvious size and grandeur, there is a certain intimacy to Coughton Court, home to the Throckmorton family since 1409. Walking up the main staircase, generations of Throckmortons stare down from their gilded frames – a deliberate celebration of what is said to be the oldest Catholic family in England.

In the drawing room – a light, airy space situated on the first floor of the central gatehouse – roundels and shields of heraldic glass commemorate dynastic marriages with other notable Catholic families. Next door, in what is known as the little drawing room, a 17th-century veneered cabinet opens to reveal a secret, mirrored recess, which was used during the celebration of Mass in a period where openly practising Catholicism was strictly forbidden.

Indeed, above the drawing room, at the top of a winding set of stairs, the Tower Room with its wide windows from where unwelcome visitors could be spotted, was often employed for Catholic ceremonies. The double priest-hole in the room's north-east turret (consisting of two hidden compartments, one above the other) would have been used as a hiding place for priests in times of trouble.

Keeping evidence of their faith from public eyes was of paramount importance when England was under Protestant rule, but the Throckmortons were thrust into the religious and political limelight when, in 1605, they became embroiled in one of the most famous assassination attempts in history.

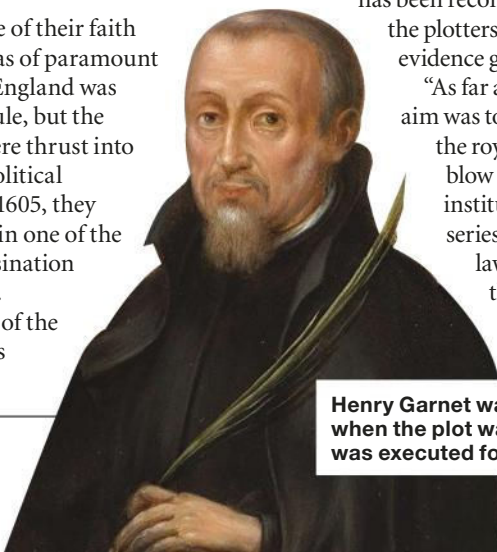
“When we think of the gunpowder plot, it’s

easy to imagine all the action taking place in Westminster, at the heart of government,” says author, historian and broadcaster Clare Jackson. “But the Midlands was where it all began, and it was here, at Coughton Court, that much of the planning took place, and where one of the conspirators, Sir Everard Digby, and his family were living, having rented the property from Thomas Throckmorton the previous year. Indeed, it was at Coughton that Digby sought to orchestrate a full-scale Catholic uprising across the Midlands – should the conspiracy prove successful.”

The plot itself had its roots in the change of regime from Tudor to Stuart, in 1603, when James VI of Scotland succeeded to the throne of England as James I following the death of Elizabeth I. Despite his strong Protestant faith, James – at first – appeared to be keen on promoting freedom of worship in his new combined kingdom. But legal toleration of the Catholic faith was not forthcoming and, says Jackson, horizons began to shrink for a lot of Catholics. While some were prepared to risk fines or even imprisonment by practising their faith – albeit in secret – a small group of aristocrats took decisive action.

“Historians still debate what the precise aims of the conspirators were,” says Jackson, “and a great deal of the evidence we do have has been reconstructed from some of the plotters’ testimonies and evidence given at later trials.

“As far as we can tell, the plot’s aim was to assassinate James and the royal family, but also to blow up parliament – the institution that had passed a series of anti-Catholic penal laws. It was hoped that in the chaos that would have followed the destruction of the



Henry Garnet was at Coughton Court when the plot was discovered and was executed for his part in it



EDJ BARTOS-DREAMSTIME.COM / BRIDGEMAN



“Bates rode over
Coughton’s moat
bridge with news
the families had
been dreading”

DR CLARE JACKSON

Coughton Court in Warwickshire was home to one of the conspirators behind the failed gunpowder plot of 1605



The discovery of Coughton's double priest-hole in 1858 revealed a folding leather altar, a palliasse (straw bed) and a rope ladder

country's established system of government, a new Catholic state could emerge. What is less well known, perhaps, is that the plotters also planned to abduct James's nine-year-old daughter, Elizabeth, from her residence at Coombe Abbey in Warwickshire, and set her up as a puppet ruler."

The plotters themselves were a small group of men, most of whom were in their mid-30s and from well-established Catholic families whose parents and grandparents had suffered greatly under the laws directed at Catholics who refused to attend Anglican services. Robert Catesby was the group's leader – the charismatic son of Sir William Catesby of Lapworth and Anne Throckmorton of Coughton. At some point in 1604, he set about recruiting a group of co-conspirators who possessed the skills needed to pull off an operation on the scale of the gunpowder plot. Catesby's cousins, Thomas and Robert Wintour, joined the conspiracy, as did Francis Tresham whose considerable wealth helped to finance the ambitious plan as it reached its later stages. Crucially, all of those involved were recruited for their advantageous connections, skills or experience.

"FAWKES'S ANONYMITY AND EXPERIENCE IN BALLISTICS MADE HIM THE PERFECT MAN TO SMUGGLE GUNPOWDER INTO LONDON"

Guy Fawkes, the man who is synonymous with the gunpowder plot, had a different background to Catesby and his fellow conspirators. Fawkes had spent much of the 1590s and early 1600s on the continent and was, therefore, virtually unknown in England. His considerable experience in ballistics and his virtual anonymity made Fawkes the perfect man to smuggle gunpowder into London.

The logistics of blowing up the Houses of Parliament without detection were considerable, and a number of plans were proposed and dismissed before the final strategy was decided upon. One of these involved the renting of a house on one side of the House of Lords, from which attempts to dig a tunnel for the gunpowder were made. Ultimately this proved too difficult and in March 1605, with the help of Thomas Percy, a kinsman of Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, the conspirators managed to rent a basement storeroom beneath the House of Lords. Slowly and stealthily over the following months, Guy Fawkes transferred gunpowder into the storeroom: by the time parliament opened on 5 November, 36 barrels were in place.

Losing his nerve

"The weak link in the plotters' circle was probably Francis Tresham", says Clare Jackson. "He was evidently nervous about the plans from the start, and, according to his written confession, tried on a number of occasions to dissuade Catesby from carrying out his plans, even offering him money to go abroad.

"What happened next is still debated, but we do know that on 26 October 1605, Tresham's brother-in-law, the Catholic nobleman Lord Monteagle, received an anonymous letter warning him not to attend parliament's opening on 5 November. Given his relationship to Monteagle, and his initial reluctance, it may well have been Tresham who supplied the tip-off and, in doing so, brought down the entire plot."

The letter, which advised the earl to "shift your attendance at this parliament for God

VISIT

Coughton Court



Coughton Fields Lane, Coughton, Alcester, Warwickshire B49 5JA

● nationaltrust.org.uk/coughton-court

and man hath concurred to punish the wickedness of this time" and warns that "they shall receive a terrible blow this parliament and yet they shall not see who hurts them", was immediately shown to Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury and one of the king's most important ministers.

Although many members of parliament were initially sceptical of the alleged threat against them, King James, whose father Henry Stuart had been killed in a suspicious explosion in 1567, took the menace of gunpowder seriously, and ordered a search of the Commons. On the evening of 4 November, Fawkes was found with his stash of gunpowder, which had been concealed beneath iron bars and wood.

NATIONAL TRUST



GUNPOWDER PLOT: FIVE MORE PLACES TO EXPLORE

1 Baddesley Clinton

WARWICKSHIRE

Where persecuted Catholics once hid

Baddesley Clinton was known as a haven for persecuted Catholics during the 1590s, and was home to Father Henry Garnet for nearly 14 years. The house boasts three priest-holes: one of these is a lath and plaster hutch in the roof above a closet. It measures 6ft 3ins by 4ft and is just 3ft 9ins high.

nationaltrust.org.uk/baddesley-clinton

2 Syon House LONDON

Where a plotter dined

Built in the 16th century on the site of a medieval abbey, Syon House was purchased by Henry Percy, 9th Earl of Northumberland in 1594. Henry's kinsman Thomas Percy dined here on 4 November, and later reported to his co-conspirators that all seemed well, and that the authorities were seemingly unaware of the plot. The house and grounds are open to the public.

syonpark.co.uk

3 Guy Fawkes Inn YORK

Where a failed regicide may have lived

Little is known of Guy Fawkes but he is believed to have been born in a house on the site of York's Guy Fawkes Inn, in 1570. Fawkes was baptised at St Michael le Belfrey church in the city and went to fight in the Low Countries for Spain against Dutch Protestants as a young man.

gfyork.com

4 Palace of Westminster, LONDON

Where a massacre was averted

It was here, in a basement storeroom, that Guy Fawkes and 36 barrels of gunpowder were discovered on 4 November 1605. The room was destroyed during a fire in 1834, but the Houses of Parliament are still searched before the annual state opening of parliament. The lantern carried by Fawkes is held in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Tours of parliament can be booked via the website. parliament.uk/visiting

5 Coombe Abbey Hotel,

WARWICKSHIRE

Where a king's daughter once lived

Princess Elizabeth, James VI and I's second daughter, was living at Coombe Abbey when the plot was uncovered. She would have become a 'puppet queen' if plans to kill her family had been successful.

coombeabbey.com

The other conspirators, meanwhile, had learned of the letter and had immediately suspected Tresham as its author, despite his denials. Unaware of the severity with which James was taking the threat, the decision was made to continue with the planned explosion. But on 5 November, the group was horrified to learn of Fawkes's arrest and the plot's discovery: the majority of them – including Catesby – fled to the Midlands.

A nerve-racking wait

Anxiously awaiting news of the plot's success or failure were the families of the conspirators. "Among them," says Jackson, "was Lady Mary Digby, wife of one of the plotters Sir Everard.

"In the early hours of 6 November, Catesby's servant, Thomas Bates, clattered his horse over the moat bridge here at Coughton Court with news the awaiting families had been dreading. Among the small group who received Bates in the drawing room here was Lady Mary and Father Henry Garnet, the Catholic priest who had performed a secret mass for the Feast of All Saints in the house just a few days before."

It was only a matter of time before the conspirators were caught. Some of them fled to Holbeche House (now a nursing home), just over 26 miles from Coughton. Here, ironically, Catesby and several others were injured in an explosion while trying to dry out their gunpowder in front of a fire in preparation for a showdown with the authorities. That showdown duly followed on 8 November when Catesby, Percy and two others were killed in a shoot-out with their pursuers.

Digby, Tresham and Bates were among those who were rounded up by the authorities over the following days while others, including Father Garnet, were arrested on suspicion of involvement. Lady Mary never saw her husband again: he, like most of the other conspirators, was publicly hanged, drawn and quartered. But although the plot to take out king and parliament had failed, we still 'remember, remember, the fifth of November' centuries after. **H**



Historical advisor: Dr Clare Jackson (left), historian, author and broadcaster is an expert on 17th-century Britain.
Words: Charlotte Hodgman



Coughton's painted canvas, known as the *Tabula Eliensis* (1596), gives details of Catholics imprisoned for their faith

"Guy Fawkes was resolute under questioning," says Jackson, "giving away only that his name was 'John Johnson', and declaring to an astonished king that 'a dangerous disease required a desperate remedy', and that he'd planned 'to blow the Scotsmen present back into Scotland'."

The Tower Room at Coughton Court was used to celebrate Mass in secret. Its large windows meant that uninvited visitors could be seen before they reached the house



6

The Second World War home front

Buried deep beneath the Kent countryside you'll find **Chislehurst Caves**. This fascinating place served as a home to thousands of people fleeing aerial assault between 1939 and 1945. Juliet Gardiner tells us more...

In many ways, Kent found itself on the front line throughout the Second World War. The county lay on the direct path of German bombers heading for London, with the planes frequently jettisoning bombs on their return journeys from raids elsewhere in the UK. Aircraft repair sheds and planes on the ground were also subjected to continual attacks as the Luftwaffe attempted to gain air superiority over the RAF.

On the ground, meanwhile, many evacuees had been sent to 'safety' – which, of course, turned out to be a relative term – in the Kent countryside upon the outbreak of the war in September 1939.

But the war's effects reached underground, too. Thirty metres beneath an area near a small, leafy, well-to-do Kentish commuter town lay the site of the largest public shelter in Britain equipped for permanent residence. Known as Chislehurst Caves, these tunnels were, in fact, man-made caverns in which chalk and flint had been mined for centuries, creating commodious spaces and some 22 miles of tunnels. They were to prove hugely useful during the conflict: one local family, the Trokes, lived there for five years.

The caves were no stranger to the demands of military combat. During the Napoleonic wars, flint for muskets were hewn from the walls, while in the First World War they'd been used as an adjunct to the Woolwich Arsenal to store ammunition. The caves also proved useful in peacetime: in the 1930s, for instance, they were used for growing mushrooms, with their dark, damp conditions ideal for cultivating the crop.

But when the Second World War broke out, their potential as a capacious air-raid shelter was clear. At first only a trickle of people sheltered in the caves, and, in compliance with local authority civil defence regulations, a trench capable of sheltering 50 people was dug at the entrance.

Within weeks of the start of the Blitz on 7 September 1940, this band of locals had swelled to a group of more than 15,000 people fleeing the relentless aerial assault on London. At first the shelterers brought only what they could carry, sleeping in deck chairs or on blankets and cushions on the uncomfortable cold earth floor, fortified by a bottle of tea and buns or sandwiches. Oil drums or dustbins containing creosote served as lavatories, while flickering candles or oil lamps provided the majority of the lighting (there were some torches, although batteries proved increasingly hard to buy). Despite all this, the caves proved so popular that special trains from Cannon Street were laid on to bring workers from London in the evening and take them back to the capital the next morning.

Soon, largely due to the efforts of a small self-appointed committee – consisting of a clergyman, a mushroom-grower and a retired rubber-planter – a small underground town had emerged, complete with electric light, proper sanitation and ventilation. Bunk beds were provided from January 1941, and hooks were driven into the walls so that curtains or sacking could be hung to create a degree of privacy. A 'cathedral', so called because of its domed chalk ceiling, was used regularly for religious services, with chairs for the congregation and an altar.



HELEN ATKINSON

A photograph of a woman, Juliet Gardiner, standing in a dimly lit cave. She is wearing a grey and pink striped sweater and has her hands clasped in front of her. In the background, there are wooden bunk beds and a child sitting on a box.

“The caves were to prove hugely useful during the conflict: one family, the Trokes, lived in them for five years”

JULIET GARDINER

Historian and broadcaster Juliet Gardiner pictured next to a reproduction of the living conditions experienced by residents of Chislehurst Caves. People returned to the subterranean town every night

Photography by Helen Atkinson



Juliet Gardiner in one of the caves' dormitories. Residents "lived in minimum comfort"

The Women's Voluntary Service (WVS) set up a canteen selling tea and buns and hot food, while the Red Cross ran an underground hospital to provide first aid and care for the sick, elderly and pregnant. One baby was born in the caves and, following the suggestions of fellow residents, her parents gave her a middle name reflecting the circumstances of her birth: Rose Cavena Wakeman.

It was not until January 1941 that civil defence authorities designated the caves as a public shelter, but by the May of that year the Blitz was effectively over and few people felt the need to shelter underground. However, exactly a week after D-Day, on 13 June 1944, the first of Hitler's long-expected 'secret weapons' – the V1 pilotless missile – launched from the coasts of the Netherlands and France and fell on London. It was followed in September by the deadly ballistic missile, the V2 rocket.

The exodus from the capital resumed and, soon, more than 2,000 people sought safety in the caves. One section was reserved for service personnel – particularly members of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAFs) from nearby Biggin Hill airfield – to ensure that they could get a good night's sleep.

"THE CAVES OFFICIALLY CLOSED AS AN AIR-RAID SHELTER ON 13 MAY 1945. SOME RESIDENTS LINGERED; THEY NO LONGER HAD ANY OTHER HOME TO GO TO"

There had always been rules for shelterers, but these were tightened up in 1944 to cope with the renewed influx. No admission to the dormitory areas of the caves was permitted after 9.30pm, or 10.30pm during 'double summer time' – which had been introduced in May 1941 to make it possible for farmers and gardeners to dig and plough for longer during daylight hours, to cut down on the accidents and inconveniences caused by blackout regulations, and to save on electricity. Children were required to be in their pitches by 9.30pm and stay there; all music had to cease by 9pm.

The rules on absence were also made more rigorous: while previously a pitch could be left vacant for 20 days before it was reclaimed by someone else, it was now presumed that if a site had been left empty for four days it was due to its occupants having been killed or seriously wounded by a V1 or V2 attack.

Just five days after VE Day, on 13 May 1945, the caves were officially closed as an air-raid shelter. Some residents lingered: as a result of the substantial bombardment that Britain had suffered, they no longer had any other home to go to.

Since the end of the Second World War, Chislehurst Caves have been used for various purposes: as a music venue, a tourist attraction, and the location for various films and television series. They are well worth a visit, with scenes of what life would have been like for the shelterers authentically recreated throughout.

The caves remain an important monument to the civilian experience during the Second World War, and indicate the natural human desire to dive underground



A set of medical supplies used by residents



A Second World War-era suitcase, gas mask and tin helmet stored at the caves

when attacks come from above. But resolve and courage would have been needed during those long months of aerial attrition, living in the dark and cold in minimum comfort.

While the inhabitants were there, night after night, unaware of what was happening outside, a genuine community sprang up: a piano was brought underground and there were concerts, sing-songs, even dancing. All of this ably demonstrates the courage, and ingenuity, with which the British people sought to 'take it' during the relentless bombardment of the Blitz and V attacks. **H**

Juliet Gardiner is a social historian, writer and broadcaster. Her books include *The Thirties: An Intimate History* and *The Blitz: The British Under Attack* (both HarperPress, 2010)

ON THE PODCAST

Listen to Juliet Gardiner discuss what life was like in Chislehurst Caves
► [historyextra.com/bbchistory magazine/podcasts](https://www.historyextra.com/bbchistory/magazine/podcasts)

SECOND WORLD WAR HOME FRONT SITES: FIVE MORE TO EXPLORE



Chislehurst Caves



Caveside Close, Old Hill, Chislehurst
Kent BR7 5NL

● chislehurst-caves.co.uk

1 Coventry Cathedral

● coventrycathedral.org.uk

Many places of worship were destroyed or badly damaged during the Blitz, most famously Coventry Cathedral, which was bombed in 1940. Indeed, its devastation was shown in newsreel cinemas around the UK to exemplify the extent of Germany's barbarism. Basil Spence, the designer of its Grade I-listed modernist replacement, insisted that the ruins of the old cathedral were kept alongside as a symbol of remembrance and reconciliation.

Other churches were also left in ruins as a memorial to Britain's wartime suffering, including the 13th-century Christchurch, Greyfriars, in the City of London and St Luke's in Liverpool.



Coventry's ruined original cathedral stands as a memorial to the war

2 Guards Chapel, Wellington Barracks

● army.mod.uk/chaplains/23369.aspx

A V1 flying bomb – known as a 'doodlebug' or 'buzz bomb' – hit the Royal Military chapel in St James's Park during morning service on Sunday 18 June 1944, killing 121 people, both civilians and military personnel, and seriously injuring 141. The Guards Chapel, as it is called, is just round the corner from Buckingham Palace and is the spiritual home of the Household Division.

4 Liverpool docks

● albertdock.com

Liverpool was a major port and Britain's main link with the US, with 90 per cent of all war supplies passing through it. As a result, Merseyside was one of the most heavily bombed areas in Britain. It was first attacked on 28 August 1940 and endured 50 raids in the next three months.

The 'Christmas Blitz' of 20–22 December killed 365 people, while on 3/4 May 1941 some 300 Luftwaffe bombers converged on Liverpool. The SS *Malakand*, carrying 1,000 tonnes of bombs and shells bound for the Middle East, was hit: the explosions lasted for 74 hours. Half the port's shipping berths were rendered unusable, 57 vessels were destroyed and the dock's entrance blocked.

5 The Italian chapel, Orkney

● orkneycommunities.co.uk/italianchapel

A number of Italian PoWs, captured in the Western Desert, were sent to the Orkneys in 1941 to build barriers against attack by German U-boats. Strictly speaking this was war work, and against the Geneva Convention: prisoners led a hard life, hewing rocks in the bitter cold. To keep up morale, some decided to build their own Roman Catholic chapel: two Nissen huts were joined up and an interned artist, Domenico Chiocchetti, recruited fellow craftsmen to transform the corrugated iron huts into a beautiful place of worship with paintings, a campanile and a carved head of Christ.

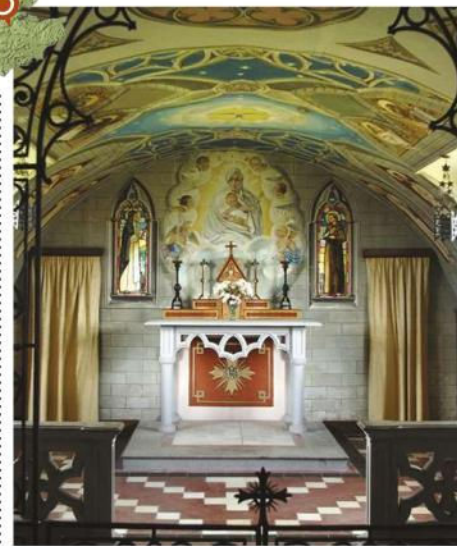


Chislehurst Caves, Kent

3 Balham tube station, London

● ltmuseum.co.uk

From the start of the Blitz, Londoners swarmed down to London's underground network when the siren went. At first there were no facilities, but gradually sanitation, bunks and canteens were provided for the 70,000 people who slept on platforms most nights. But even the tube was not safe. The worst incident was at Balham station on 14 October 1940 when 66 people died, most of whom suffocated or drowned when gas, water and sewage pipes fractured. A plaque in the station's booking hall marks the event.



The interior of the Italian chapel in Orkney, built from two Nissen huts and filled with artwork created by Italian prisoners of war

ISLANDS IN THE SUN

Sicily, Italy**by Miles Russell**

Miles recommends a 'three-cornered isle' teeming with Greek, Roman and Norman cultural treasures, not to mention mouth-watering food and wine

Sicily is distinct in so many ways from mainland Italy, of which it is an autonomous region. Washed by the waters of the Mediterranean, Tyrrhenian and Ionian Seas, this strategically placed 'three-cornered isle' has been a battleground for Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans, Vandals, Ostrogoths, Byzantines, Arabs, Normans and other great powers of the ancient, medieval and early modern world.

Today, Sicily is perhaps most famous for food, wine, town-life, beaches and, unfortunately, its association with organised crime. For me, however, it is the diverse, unspoiled and monumentally impressive nature of its rural heritage that is its greatest attraction, although food and wine are a close second and third.

Mount Etna, Europe's largest active volcano, grumbles petulantly at the eastern margins of Sicily, forever threatening to smother the towns, villages and farms that thrive upon its fertile soils. It was the combination of this good farmland and the strategic location that first drew ancient Greek and Phoenician colonists. To this day there is a Greek feel

to the eastern half while the west sits upon more solid north African foundations.

I first visited in the late 1980s, having just graduated from university with no clear idea of what to do with my life. Within minutes of landing on the sun-scorched tarmac of Palermo airport, I was engulfed by the colours, sounds and organised chaos that typifies modern Sicily. I loved it. With its mix of Italian and African food, earthy red wine and well-preserved Greek, Roman and medieval architecture, the island is the ideal holiday location.

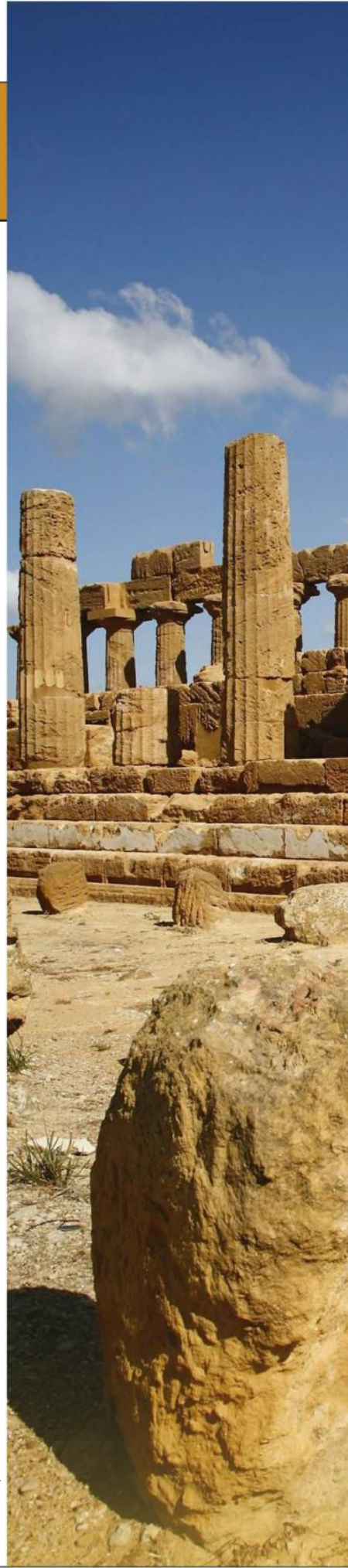
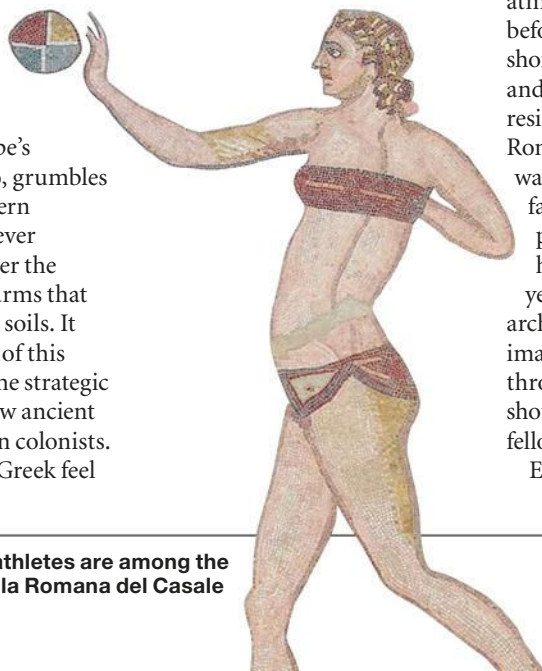
Within the hectic, car-filled streets of Palermo, Norman, Arabic and baroque buildings jostle for attention amid modern steel and glass. Notable treasures can be appreciated by the

dedicated history tourist, including the 12th-century red-domed oriental roof of San Giovanni degli Eremiti, the fashionable square of Quattro Canti and the catacombs of the Convento dei Cappuccini (where mummified corpses of the city's former elite are stacked in rows).

Away from the disfiguring and apparently uncontrolled property developments that blight suburban Palermo, sun-parched, rugged hills rise dramatically. Ancient cities hug the coastline while medieval stone villages, complete with villas, mansions and renaissance churches, cling precariously to the mountains.

The diverse colonisers of ancient Sicily all left their cultural footprint upon the land. In Syracuse, I like to explore the atmospheric Greek theatre before wandering down to the shore where, between 215 BC and 213 BC, the townspeople resisted the might of republican Rome. The defence was aided by war machines invented by its famous inhabitant, philosopher Archimedes. His house, let alone his bath, has yet to be discovered archaeologically, but it is easy to imagine him running naked through the many streets shouting 'eureka' to startled fellow citizens.

Elsewhere, in the Valley of the



ALAMY, ROBERT HARDING

The Juno temple is just one of the spectacular Greek ruins at the Valley of Temples in Agrigento



Temples at Agrigento, a Greek colony once described as “the fairest city inhabited by mortals”, an energetic walk takes visitors past a dizzying array of classical temples. The imposing ruins of Selinunte – where column bases and decorated stonework lie in heaps like the discarded building blocks of a children’s toy – sit in majestic grandeur overlooking the sea. Elsewhere the stone-paved streets and small open squares of Erice are beguiling, whilst at Cefalù the 12th-century religious splendour of the Norman cathedral and its golden wall mosaics is simply breath-taking.

My favourite place in Sicily, however, is Villa Romana del Casale, close to Piazza Armerina, a third-to fourth-century powerhouse with the finest mosaics to survive from the Roman world. Tourists flock to see mosaics depicting ‘bikini-wearing’ athletes. However it is the hunting mosaic, in which tigers, rhinos, boar and the fictional griffin are being pursued, that is the most spectacular exhibit.

Other floors depict chariot racing, then the premier sport in Rome, and scenes from Greek mythology including the labours of Hercules, and Odysseus with the Cyclops Polyphemus (shown confusingly with three eyes). We know nothing about the original villa owners, although many have speculated that they had imperial associations. Standing before these masterpieces, it is all too easy to believe you are an emperor yourself. **H**

Dr Miles Russell is senior lecturer at Bournemouth University

Read more about Miles’s experiences in Sicily at historyextra.com/bbchistorymagazine/sicily

ADVICE FOR TRAVELLERS

BEST TIME TO GO

Spring is the best time to appreciate Sicily to the full, although be careful to avoid the Easter holidays, unless you like huge crowds and closed shops.

GETTING THERE

Sicily is served by three main airports: Palermo, Catania and Trapani. British Airways flies direct to Catania from London Heathrow or London Gatwick.

WHAT TO PACK

A sun hat is a must, as is a laid back attitude to road traffic – which can be challenging.

WHAT TO BRING BACK

Lots of amazing photographs, and memories, and olive oil – lots and lots of tasty olive oil.

READERS’ VIEWS

Villa Romana del Casale for some of the most stunning mosaics you’ll see - late Roman, very intricate & very beautiful

@ShirleyWootten

Loved it! Taormina beautiful, esp. Greek theatre. Local driver took us to Etna – wow! Montalbano or Godfather tours too

@lesleysworld

Selinunte Greek Temples, Modica and Ragusa for Baroque, Siracusa amphitheatres, Ortigia Duomo. All the food and wine

@LifeafterSicily



ISLANDS IN THE SUN

Corfu, Greece



by Saul David

Once said to be Scheria in Homer's *Odyssey*, Saul explores the Greek island getaway that owes much of its popularity to the Venetians

I first holidayed in Corfu, a large leg-shaped island on the north-west frontier of Greece, when I was 11 years old. We drove all the way in a VW camper van, covering the last leg from Bari to Corfu Town in a ferry. After a week and many adventures on the road, we set up camp in a beautiful two-bedroom cottage on Corfu's unfashionable south-west coast, near the town of Agios Gordios.

With not enough beds to go round, some of my family (myself included) slept in hammocks. In the morning we'd stroll down a rough track to the nearby beach for breakfast in a cafe. We'd often pass the same old Greek lady, clad from top to toe in black, riding a donkey.

During that trip, and on subsequent ones, I discovered the island's long and fascinating history. It's said to be the island Scheria in Homer's *Odyssey*, and Jason (of Argonaut fame) is supposed to have married Medea there.

More recently the island was ruled by the seafaring Venetians from the late 14th to the late 18th century, when

it was 'liberated' by the French. The Venetian influence is still present in the beautiful buildings of Corfu's old town, now a Unesco World Heritage Site.

The jewel in Corfu's crown, arguably, is the Palaio Frourio, or old citadel, built by the Venetians on an artificial islet, and used today for concerts and sound and light shows. Since my first trip its interior has been restored, and it is well worth a visit. So, too, is the Neo Frourio, or new citadel, a huge complex of Venetian fortifications that dominates the north-eastern part of the town. This area used to be off limits, but since the recent departure of its naval garrison, its maze of medieval corridors and bastions has been open to the public.

French control of the island was intermittent and brief. After Napoleon's fall in 1815, Britain was granted a protectorate over the Ionian Islands (of which Corfu

is the second largest, behind Kefalonia). The British Lord High Commissioner set up home in the impressive Palace of Saint Michael and Saint George on the edge of the old town, a complex built in the Roman style by the Venetians. In 1864, after half a century of largely benign rule – with new roads built, the water system improved and Greek established as the official language – the British transferred sovereignty to mainland Greece.

Yet thousands of Britons still travel to Corfu every year to enjoy the island's rugged landscape, uncrowded beaches and beautiful turquoise sea. It can get a little rowdy in busy 'British' resorts like Ipsos to the north of Corfu Town. But venture a little further up the north-east coast and you'll find a succession of beautiful bays with houses and villas clinging to their steep hillsides. My favourite is Agni Bay with its three fabulous beachfront tavernas. The best is the Nikolas Taverna, run by Perikles (son of Nikolas) Katsaros, a larger-than-life mustachioed patron who welcomes each and every guest – from humble tourist to Hollywood film star – with the same effusive greeting. The pièce de resistance is 'Greek Night', held every Thursday, when Perikles gives a sparkling,

Built on the remains of a Byzantine castle by the Venetians in the 15th century, Corfu's Palaio Frourio offers spectacular views



The clock tower of the Palaio Frourio – or old citadel – is one of the highlights of a trip to Corfu

gravity-defying demonstration of traditional dancing. A more sedate dinner can be had in the neighbouring bay of Kalamí at the White House, once the home of 20th-century British authors Lawrence and Gerald Durrell.

Both Agni and Kalamí Bays – and indeed the whole stretch of the north-east coast – are a haven for yachts, and that is how I've been holidaying on (or, should I say, off) Corfu for the last 20 years. Assuming, like me, you've got your helmsman's

ROBERT HARDING

ADVICE FOR TRAVELLERS

BEST TIME TO GO

June and September, when the temperatures are not at their fiercest and the sea is cool enough to refresh. Corfu Carnival, which was brought to the island by the Venetians in the Middle Ages, is a colourful and popular affair, which takes place at the end of February or in early March.

GETTING THERE

Easyjet, Ryanair and Thomas Cook all fly to Corfu Town from most British airports.

WHAT TO PACK

Don't forget your swimming costume, diving mask and snorkel, and a tried-and-tested mozzie spray.

WHAT TO BRING BACK

Colourful Corfiot wraps and blankets.

READERS' VIEWS

The Old Fort in Corfu town has seen numerous sieges and a really big explosion during its lifetime. It has a fab view as well

@GetHistory

I'd highly recommend the poignant Achilleion Palace in Gastouri built by Empress Elisabeth of Bavaria in the 1880s

@Babhdan

Corfu is wonderful but hop across the strait to Butrint in Albania for a stunning historical site

@cwrightwick



“Thousands of Britons travel to Corfu every year to enjoy its rugged landscape

licence, you simply pick up a barebones (unskipped) yacht at the Gouvia Marina, north of the old town (and just a 20-minute taxi ride from the airport), and set sail. The anchorages are rarely full, the restaurants are superb, and the sea conditions are, by and large, not too challenging. More adventurous sailors will head for the nearby islands of Paxos and Antipaxos, or even mainland Greece and Albania. I prefer pottering up the coast to the tiny, picturesque seaport of

Kassiopi, with its abundance of waterfront bars and tavernas, and dominated by the hilltop ruins of a 13th-century Angevin castle. Just don't make the mistake of staying in the harbour overnight: music from nightclubs can still be heard at 6am!

If you venture inland from Kassiopi, where Roman emperor Tiberius is said to have kept a villa, the must-see destination is the village of Palea Perithia, on the north slope of the island's highest point, Mount Pantokra-

tor. Abandoned in the 1960s, the village boasts a 14th-century Byzantine church, complete with recently uncovered and preserved frescoes. The drive up is long and windy; but, for the view alone, it's definitely worth it. **LI**

Professor Saul David is a historian, broadcaster and author

Read more about Saul's experiences in Corfu at historyextra.com/bbchistorymagazine/corfu

ISLANDS IN THE SUN

Antigua, West Indies



by **Sam Willis**

A perfect destination for the cricket-crazy and maritime-minded, Sam explores the Caribbean island of Antigua – whose beautiful golden beaches belie its ugly history of slavery

I have only discovered one place that combines all the things I love in a holiday: nice beaches, cricket and interesting history. That place is Antigua, an island first settled by the British in 1632.

Antigua is a perfect location for the maritime-minded, boasting 365 beaches – one for each day of the year. I admire the marketing ingenuity of this bold claim but doubt its authenticity: I suspect there are far more.

This is no place of huge windswept beaches but of intimate coves everywhere you look. As with all Caribbean islands, there is a satisfying difference between the windswept beaches of the eastern coast and the sheltered beaches of the west; in that difference is the answer to a number of fascinating historical questions.

Antigua lies roughly in the centre of a chain of Caribbean islands that stretch like a fleet of warships vertically up the eastern edge of

the Caribbean Sea. The winds, most of the time, are consistent: they blow from east to west. Those winds are key to understanding the islands, which grew in importance during the age of sail, when the majority were turned over to slave-farmed sugar.

British merchants and warships sailed down those prevailing easterly winds, arriving from Europe at the south-easternmost point of the chain: Barbados. They would then sail northwards, up the chain, before heading back to Europe. Barbados was the major naval base at the bottom of the chain with Jamaica at the top, but the British needed another site, midway down the chain, from which to police the seas and shelter from storms.

Antigua provided the answer. At English Harbour on the sheltered southern shore, the British found the perfect deep-water and easily defensible anchorage where a fleet could shelter from hurricanes. In fact, they

liked the location so much that they built a large dockyard there in 1725, where the navy could re-victual, water and repair their ships.

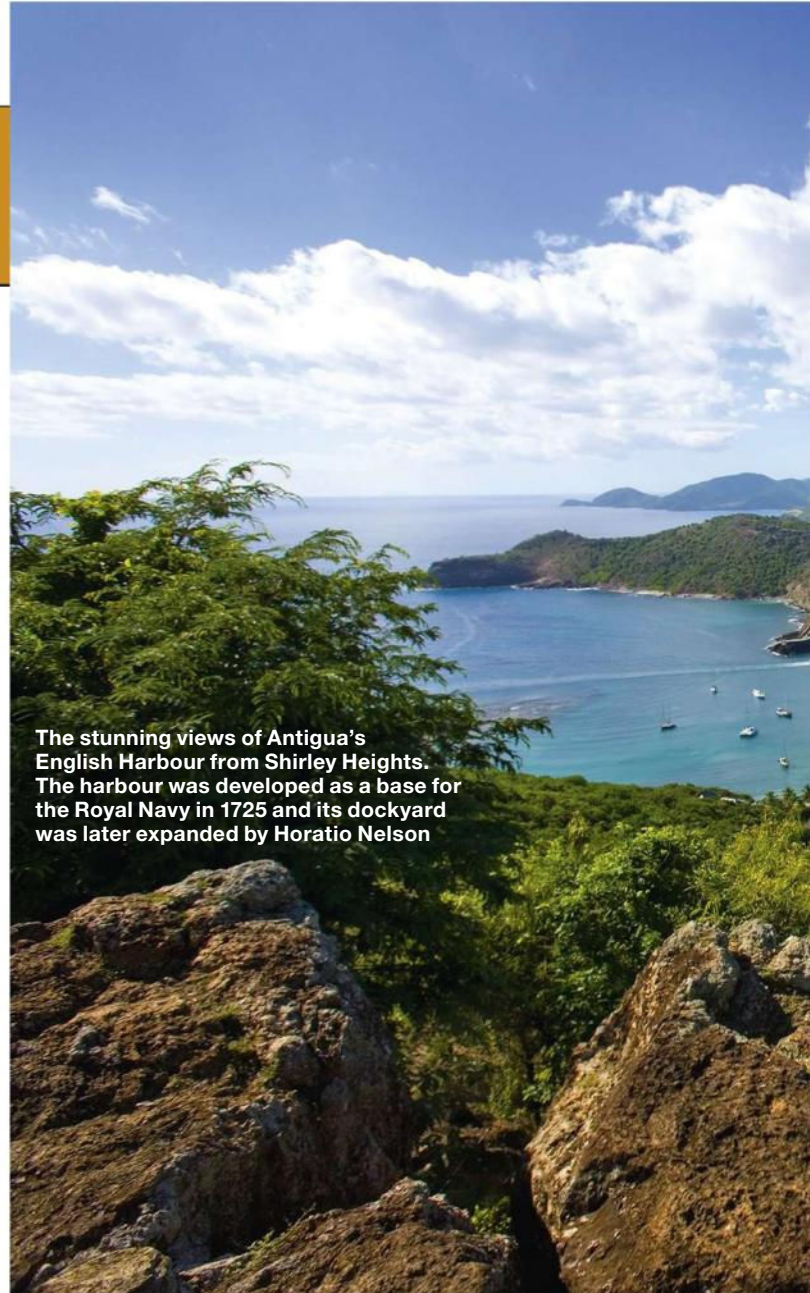
English Harbour is still a must-visit location: the quality of its historical buildings is unmatched anywhere in the British Caribbean. The Dockyard Museum tells the story of how the yard flourished from 1725 until 1889 and of how Horatio Nelson was a key figure in dockyard life in the 1780s. In the dockyard itself, you can still see the remarkable sail loft and the beautiful colonial-style naval officers' house that dates from the 1850s. Eagle-eyed travellers will spot the early 18th-century graffiti just outside

the dockyard, carved by miserable British sailors.

The presence of the navy in turn led to an increased army presence on the island and its military remains are also fascinating. The best buildings are those at Shirley Heights, high up in the hill overlooking, and defending, the dockyard. But for those who want a real sense of the power of the navy and army, a visit to Fort James, protecting St John's harbour, is a must – it is the only fort with its full complement of cannon in place.

Antigua thus became home for thousands of British sailors who lived a miserable life sweltering on board warships, suffering from scurvy and slowly dying from typhus while policing an

The stunning views of Antigua's English Harbour from Shirley Heights. The harbour was developed as a base for the Royal Navy in 1725 and its dockyard was later expanded by Horatio Nelson



A 1942 stamp of Antigua depicting the cannons at Fort James



“While sailors policed the seas, the interior of the island was entirely turned over to slave-farmed sugar

industry that was itself fuelled by misery. For, while sailors policed the seas, the interior of the island was entirely turned over to slave-farmed sugar. This is one of the most enduringly fascinating things about the island – the contrast between the luxuries of modern holiday making and the agonies of the past.

The sugar industry, curiously, is also the key to the beauty of Antigua's beaches: they seem so spectacular because, in comparison, the interior is so barren. It became so because the island has suffered from generations of farming on an unprecedented scale. By the mid-18th century there were 150 sugar cane-processing windmills on the island, each linked to a

sizeable plantation. The interior is now almost entirely covered by invasive plant species that moved in once the sugar crops had gone. Now there is little to see in Antigua's interior beyond the odd archaeological site linked to the sugar industry, such as Betty's Hope plantation, and, of course, the Antiguan's main love: cricket.

There are many layers of history on show at the Museum of Antigua and Barbuda in the island's capital, St John's – the first evidence of human habitation dates to 2400 BC, but close to the museum's front door is displayed the island's most prized possession: Viv Richards's cricket bat. It was used to score the fastest century in history, against England in 1986, a

record that still stands. That achievement, as well as those of the peerless West Indies team of the 1980s, exported the name of Antigua, and the West Indies, around the world. A cricket stadium has recently been built in Richards's honour. Time your visit right and you could have a day or two away from the beach to watch cricket in the Caribbean sunshine, while you ponder the island's extraordinary beauty and tortuous history. **H**

Dr Sam Willis is a maritime historian, archaeologist and presenter. sam-willis.com

Read more about Sam's Antigua experiences at historyextra.com/bbchistormagazine/antigua

ADVICE FOR TRAVELLERS

BEST TIME TO GO

Antigua is coolest and driest between mid-December and mid-April, with September seeing the peak of hurricane activity. The anniversary of the island's complete independence from Britain, gained in 1981, is celebrated on 1 November. antigua-barbuda.org

GETTING THERE

Antigua's VC Bird International is the main airport for flights from Britain to the north-eastern Caribbean and is about five miles from St John's. British Airways and Virgin Atlantic both fly from London Gatwick. A regular bus service runs between St John's and English Harbour, and the island has a number of car hire companies. Taxis are available across the island.

WHAT TO PACK

A cricket bat and swimmers.

WHAT TO BRING BACK

A new way of thinking about the past. Cherish it.

READERS' VIEWS

Visit Nelson's dockyard, his home 1784–87, eat at Roti King in St John's, pick tamarind and swim with Hawksbill turtles
@chris_maudsley

Go to Shirley Heights on a Sunday evening for entertainment and a splendid view of English Harbour
@BevMSmith



Britain's coal industry

Dr Ben Curtis and Charlotte Hodgman visit the **Big Pit National Coal Museum** in Blaenafon, where miners risked their lives working in an industry that defined south Wales for decades

Sitting on the north-eastern edge of the south Wales coalfield – an area of about 1,000 square miles, stretching from Pontypool in Torfaen, to St Brides Bay in Pembrokeshire – the huge, red winding tower of Big Pit is an impressive and unmissable sight for visitors as they pull into the museum car park. Once the heart of mining operations at the site, its powerful engine still winds people up and down the 90-metre mineshaft, although these days the only passengers are visitors who have chosen to embark on a 50-minute guided tour of the former mine. The shrieks and groans of the winder – introduced in 1952 as a replacement for the steam-powered original – echo constantly across the site.

Those wishing to take the underground tour are provided with a hard hat, safety lamp, waist belt with battery, and a rebreather that can filter toxic air for an hour – just in case! As the elevator cage comes to a shuddering halt in the gloom below, tour groups are led through the cramped, dark and often damp tunnels, where hundreds of men once worked in gruelling conditions, cutting coal by hand and transporting it to the surface. The underground stables for the pit ponies who pulled heavy trams of coal, and rarely saw daylight, are also poignant.

Emerging into the fresh air, visitors are free to roam the site, which has retained many of its original structures, among them blacksmiths' buildings from the 1870s; a lamp room, where miners collected and returned their equipment; and a fan house, which provided essential oxygen

into the mine, and removed or diluted unwanted gases, dust and fumes.

Elsewhere, a walk up to the former canteen (now a cafe), and then on to the viewpoint above, provides a stunning panorama of the site and the remnants of its industrial past.

Small beginnings

Standing on the site of an earlier mine (Kearsley Pit), which was sunk in 1860, Big Pit is an amalgamation of several other mines, and came into being in 1880 when the existing 30-metre shaft was deepened to 90 metres. "Coal mining had been present in Blaenafon since the late 18th century, but by the time Big Pit opened, the British coal mining industry was experiencing an unprecedented boom," says Ben Curtis, lecturer in modern Welsh history at Cardiff University. "The pit is named for the width of its shaft, which measures 5.5 metres at its widest point, and was big enough to wind two trams of coal side by side – this was the first of its kind in the area."

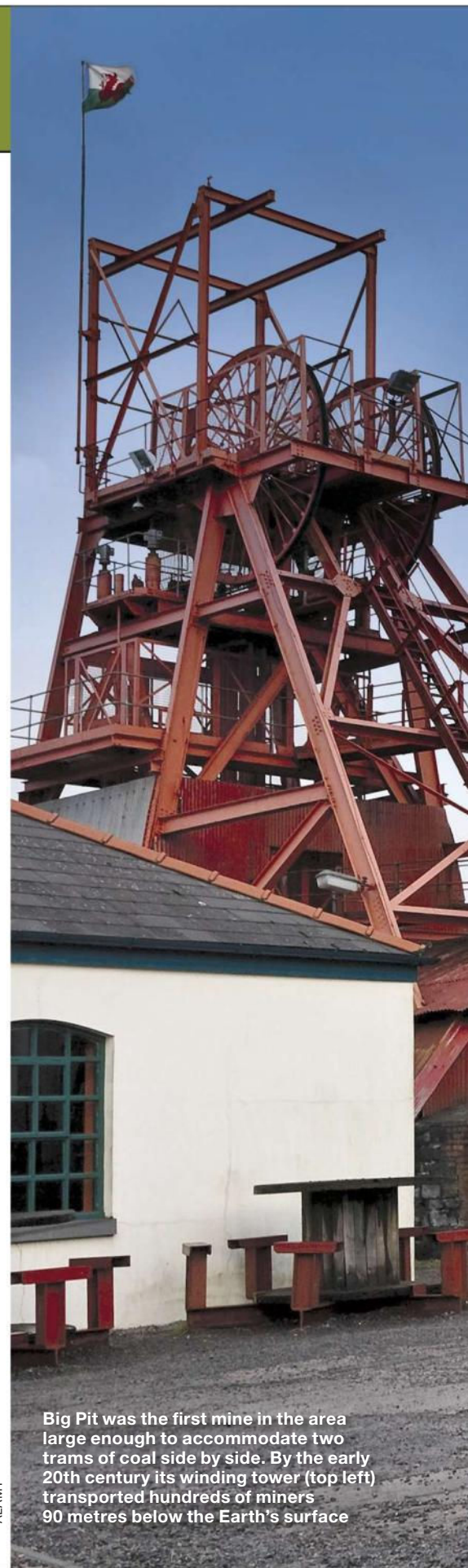
And Big Pit continued to grow. By 1896, 528 men were employed at the site, producing gas, house and steam coal. By 1908, manpower at the pit had risen to 1,145.

"The south Wales coalfield is basin-shaped, with coal seams dipping from the rim to the centre," says Curtis. "Big Pit sits at the edge of this basin, where the coal is easier to reach, so its shaft is relatively shallow compared to more central sites like Deep Navigation Colliery near Merthyr Tydfil, which boasted a shaft of nearly 700 metres."

By the early 20th century, in terms of size of workforce, coal had become the single biggest industry in Britain. As a consequence, that



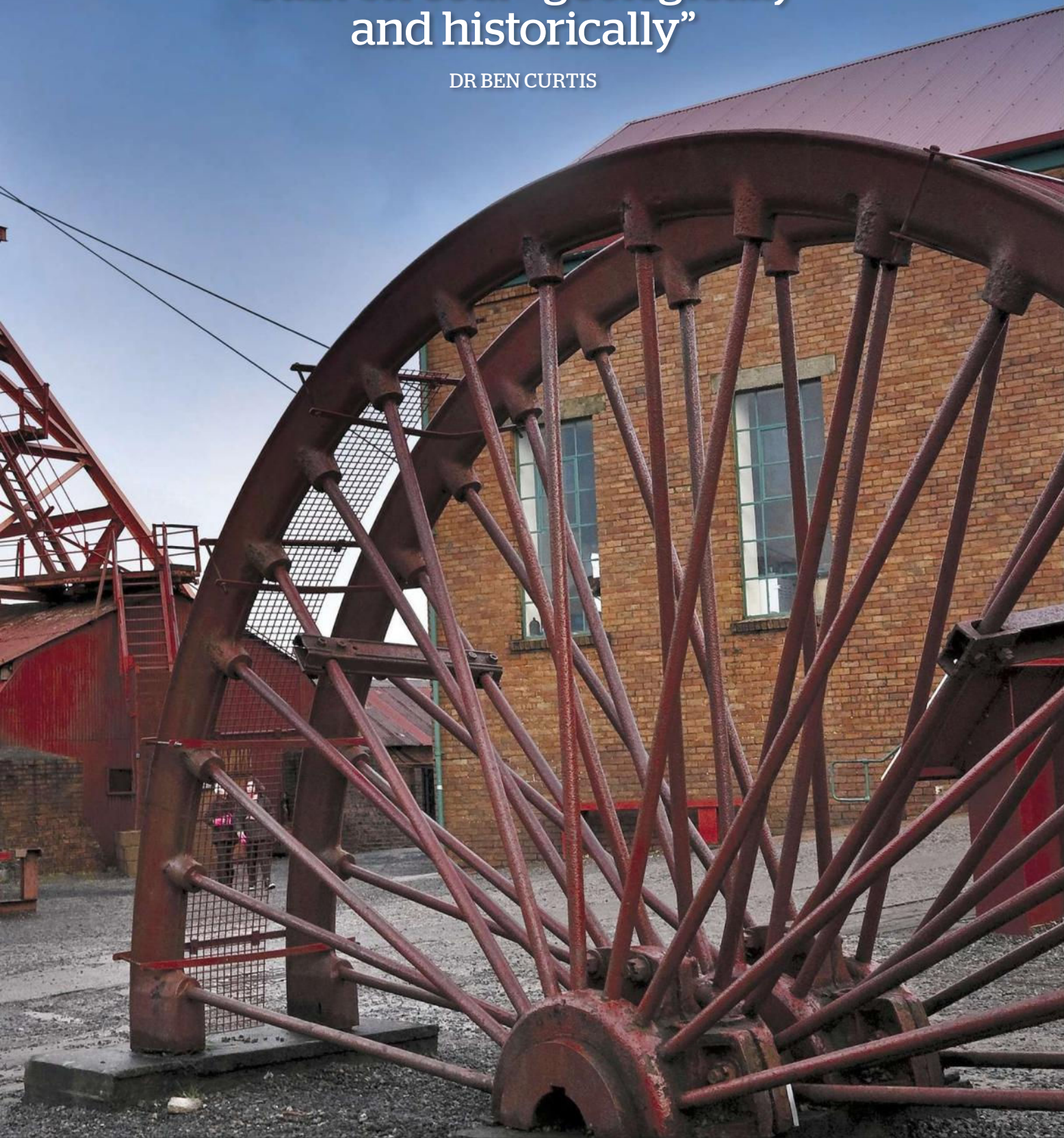
Invented by Sir Humphry Davy, in 1815, Davy lamps protected naked flames from gases like methane



Big Pit was the first mine in the area large enough to accommodate two trams of coal side by side. By the early 20th century its winding tower (top left) transported hundreds of miners 90 metres below the Earth's surface

“It’s no exaggeration to say
modern south Wales was
built on coal – geologically
and historically”

DR BEN CURTIS





Losing a limb in a mining accident was not uncommon, but many continued to work underground despite their disabilities

workforce expanded from 109,000 in 1830 to 1,095,000 in 1913.

“At this time, mining productivity in south Wales was something like 300 tonnes of coal per person, per year,” says Curtis. “That’s equivalent to one miner cutting around a tonne of coal every day, by hand. What’s more, colliers were paid according to how much they mined. The more you cut, the more money you were paid.”

Killed in ones and twos

Coal mining was one of the most dangerous industries in Britain throughout the period. “Most people tend to think of its dangers in terms of the terrible pit explosions,” says Curtis, who has been involved in a recent disability history project focusing on three British coalfields between 1780 and 1948. “However, these tragedies are not really representative of the whole spectrum of dangers. In fact, the total number of people killed in dramatic mining explosions is a tiny fraction of those killed in ones and twos by things like falling roofs.”

A permanent disability was far more likely than loss of life. Some 16.5 per cent of British coal miners were injured every year between 1910 and 1914. And by 1914, a miner was killed every six hours, and severely injured every two hours, in the British coal industry.

“One of the most common disabilities experienced by miners – and one that current and former mineworkers are still suffering, and dying, from – is pneumoconiosis, a lung disease caused by prolonged exposure to coal dust, which accumulates in the lungs”, says Curtis. “Eye-strain from

poor light, inflammation of the joints from crawling and kneeling in cramped conditions were also common. But losing a limb wouldn’t necessarily put an end to a mining career – in the 19th and early 20th centuries, you could still potentially work underground, or transfer to a job on the colliery surface, such as sorting and sizing the coal.”

Pit explosions, when they did occur, could be horrific and deadly. Britain’s worst mining disaster took place at Universal Colliery, Senghennydd in October 1913, when an explosion ripped through its underground workings. The disaster is believed to have been caused by a build-up of methane – known as firedamp – which had been ignited by an electric spark from a piece of mining equipment. (Flammable gases were a common problem in coal mines; visitors to Big Pit are not permitted to take any electrical equipment into the mine for this very reason.) Some 439 miners and one rescuer were killed in the disaster, with rescue attempts continuing for three weeks after. Big Pit, too, had its share of accidents, including an underground fire in December 1908, which killed three people.

It wasn’t only men who faced daily dangers. In the early days women, and children as young as eight, could be found toiling for up to 14 hours a day. But in 1842, following a Royal Commission report on working conditions for women and children in the mines, an act of parliament prohibited all underground work for women, and boys under 10. Women still worked at the colliery surfaces – albeit in small numbers – until the early 20th century.

Further mining legislation was passed in 1850, addressing safety with the introduction of coal mine inspectors, and raising the underground age limit for boys to 12.

“As well as new legislation, the 19th century also saw new mining technology gradually introduced to collieries,” says Curtis. “Improvements to machinery resulted in deeper shafts, as the technology enabled mines to be ventilated more efficiently and coal to be wound up the shaft at a faster pace.”

“BY 1914, A MINER WAS KILLED EVERY SIX HOURS, AND SEVERELY INJURED EVERY TWO HOURS, IN THE BRITISH COAL INDUSTRY”

VISIT

Big Pit National Coal Museum



Blaenafon, Torfaen NP4 9XP

● museumwales.ac.uk/bigpit

But some of these developments, while improving productivity, introduced new dangers for miners. Electrical machinery in enclosed spaces could cause injury and dangerous sparks, while powerful coal-cutting machines introduced in the 1920s and 1930s increased the amount of coal dust being thrown up into the air. This in turn saw a surge in diseases like pneumoconiosis.

Power of the unions

Miners’ determination to improve their working conditions and wages led to a scattering of localised unions springing up across Britain’s mining communities.

In 1888, the Miners’ Federation of Great Britain (MFGGB) was established in Newport and 10 years later the South Wales Miners’ Federation (SWMF) was formed, following the defeat of a strike by south Wales miners



RICHARD BURTON ARCHIVES, PORTHCRAWL/ALAMY

BRITISH COALMINING: FIVE MORE PLACES TO EXPLORE



Controlled explosions were often used underground to clear rock so that miners could reach the coal

over pay scales, which had led to a six-month lockout of workers.

By 1914, there were over 234,000 miners in south Wales and the SWMF had become the largest affiliated union within the MFGB, the biggest union in Britain at that time. In 1899 it had joined the MFGB, followed by the Northumberland Miners' Federation and the Durham Miners' Federation in 1907 and 1908 respectively.

But despite a united front from the workers, from 1914 the industry went into decline. "The First World War greatly disrupted the south Wales collieries, which had relied on exporting their coal," says Curtis. "Add to this the fact that many miners volunteered to fight, as well as the growth of coal industries in other parts of

the world such as Germany, Poland and the US – not to mention an increase in the use of oil – and it's not hard to see why the coal industry was soon in crisis.

"The 1920s and 1930s was a difficult period for the coal industry, characterised by a fall in output and prominent industry-wide strikes. In 1947, nationalisation of the coal industry seemed to many miners to offer the prospect of a brighter future. But by the 1960s, pits began to be measured by their productivity and smaller sites closed in favour of larger, more productive 'superpits'. Workers started leaving the mines, concerned for the future of the industry."

Decline and fall

Although the coal industry still employed around 700,000 mineworkers in Britain during the 1940s and 1950s – and even as late as the early to mid-1980s boasted a workforce of around 200,000 – the decline seemed irreversible.

In 1981, mining strikes looked likely after Margaret Thatcher's conservative government proposed further pit closures. Thatcher initially backed down, but in 1984, the issue reared its head once more after it was announced that 20 pits were to close, with a loss of some 20,000 jobs. At its height, the strike involved 142,000 miners but, after a year-long stoppage, in March 1985 the National Union of Mineworkers was forced to bring the strike to an end. Pits closed rapidly over the following years and in 1994 the industry was privatised.

"Almost everything we think of as defining south Wales today has been shaped by the legacy of coal and the mining communities of south Wales – from the prominent position of Cardiff, Barry, Swansea and Newport as former coal exporting ports, to the historically strong support for the Labour party, to the popularity of rugby, and the traditional association with male voice choirs," says Curtis. "It's no exaggeration to say modern south Wales was built on coal – both geologically and historically." **■**



Historical advisor: Ben Curtis (left). Ben's latest book is *The South Wales Miners, 1964-1985* (University of Wales Press, 2013). Words: Charlotte Hodgman

Big Pit's winding machine transported cages of men, coal and materials up and down the shaft. Today's electric version replaced the previous steam-driven machinery

1 National Mining Museum Scotland

MIDLOTHIAN

Where mining history is on show

This four-acre site – located at the former Lady Victoria Colliery – captures the developments in mining over generations. Highlights include the most powerful steam winding engine in Scotland and an extensive collection of mining-related artefacts and equipment.

nationalminingmuseum.com

2 Woodhorn Museum

NORTHUMBERLAND

Where you can view miners' art

Woodhorn is sited in original colliery buildings, along with a new building, inspired by the huge coal-cutting machines once used underground. Displays paint a picture of life in this former mining community, which is also home to a series of paintings by artists known as the 'Pitmen Painters'.

experiencewoodhorn.com

3 Welsh National Mining Memorial

CAERPHILLY

Where victims are remembered

This monument and memorial garden commemorates the explosion at Universal Colliery in Senghenydd in 1913 in which 439 miners died, as well as other Welsh mining disasters. About 17 miles away, in Six Bells, Blaenau Gwent, stands the Guardian, a massive statue that memorialises victims of the Six Bells disaster of 1960, the worst in post-1945 Welsh history. visitcaerphilly.com

4 Beamish Museum

COUNTY DURHAM

Where mining life is recreated

This open-air 'living history' museum aims to give insight into life in the north-east of England in the 1820s, 1900s and 1940s. The 300-acre site boasts a former drift mine, mining village and a re-creation of an early 20th-century town. beamish.org.uk

5 National Coal Mining Museum for England

WEST YORKSHIRE

Where visitors can go underground

Based at the site of the former Caphouse Colliery at Overton, the museum offers guided underground tours where visitors can experience the conditions miners worked in and see the tools and machines they once used. ncm.org.uk

8

The dissolution of the monasteries

Adam Morton and Nige Tassell visit **Fountains Abbey**, the most recognisable reminder of Henry VIII's campaign to eradicate Rome from English life

There are few more awesome sights in the depths of winter than the ruins of Fountains Abbey in North Yorkshire. Abandoned and ruined it may be, yet the abbey stands proud and majestic, its crumpled walls bearing the scars of Henry VIII's campaign to dissolve the monasteries nearly 500 years ago.

We're visiting in February half-term, so the shrieks of children fill the chilly air while a procession of dog-walkers take to the paths of the 273-hectare (674-acre) National Trust estate in which the abbey sits. The only sign of conflict is when a cocker spaniel strains at his lead in an attempt to disturb a brace of pheasants lurking in the undergrowth.

Things weren't always so peaceful. During the early decades of the 16th century, Fountains was the country's richest Cistercian monastery – before it became one of the biggest casualties of Henry's attempt to wipe the influence of Rome from the English landscape. The sweeping programme of closures – orchestrated by the king's right-hand man, Thomas Cromwell – left Fountains, and hundreds of other monasteries and abbeys, empty and at the mercy of the elements.

The decision to dissolve England's monasteries was a consequence of Henry's split from the Catholic church after Pope Clement VII refused to annul the king's marriage to Catherine of Aragon in 1527. Not that this was merely an act of revenge by an angry

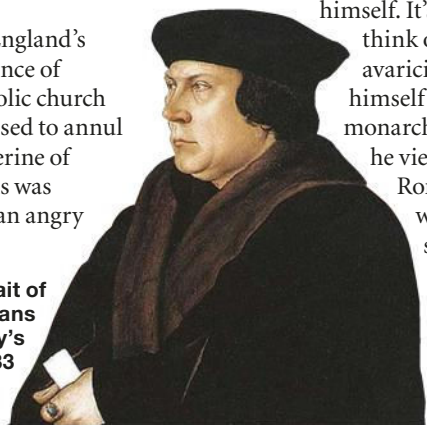
monarch, as the University of Newcastle's Adam Morton explains as we stroll down the estate's gentle slopes towards the ruins.

"There's a danger of seeing Henry as a stage villain," he says. "He's often viewed in black-and-white terms – as someone who was motivated by lust or who was unstable. But above all else, the Dissolution was an exertion of power. Henry now had this new type of kingship – royal supremacy. It made him head of church and state – and there was no better demonstration of that than dissolving the monasteries."

By the mid-1530s, a quarter of a century into his reign, Henry had spent much of his inheritance, while the monasteries were known for being cash-rich. Again, though, Morton warns that we shouldn't interpret the king's actions as mono-causal. Rather than being a simple cash grab, the financial aspect was part of a wider restructuring of society. "However, accusing the monasteries of avarice or of hypocrisy – preaching charity while being very, very rich – was certainly part of the polemical strategy to downgrade them in the eyes of the populace or parliament.

"We also have to consider how Henry saw himself. It's very easy for us to think of him as greedy or avaricious, but he saw himself as an Old Testament monarch. Rightly or wrongly, he viewed his break from Rome as biblical – as the way in which a king should act. He often described himself as King David or King Hezekiah. These were iconoclasts.

This copy of a portrait of Thomas Cromwell by Hans Holbein shows Henry's enforcer in around 1532–33

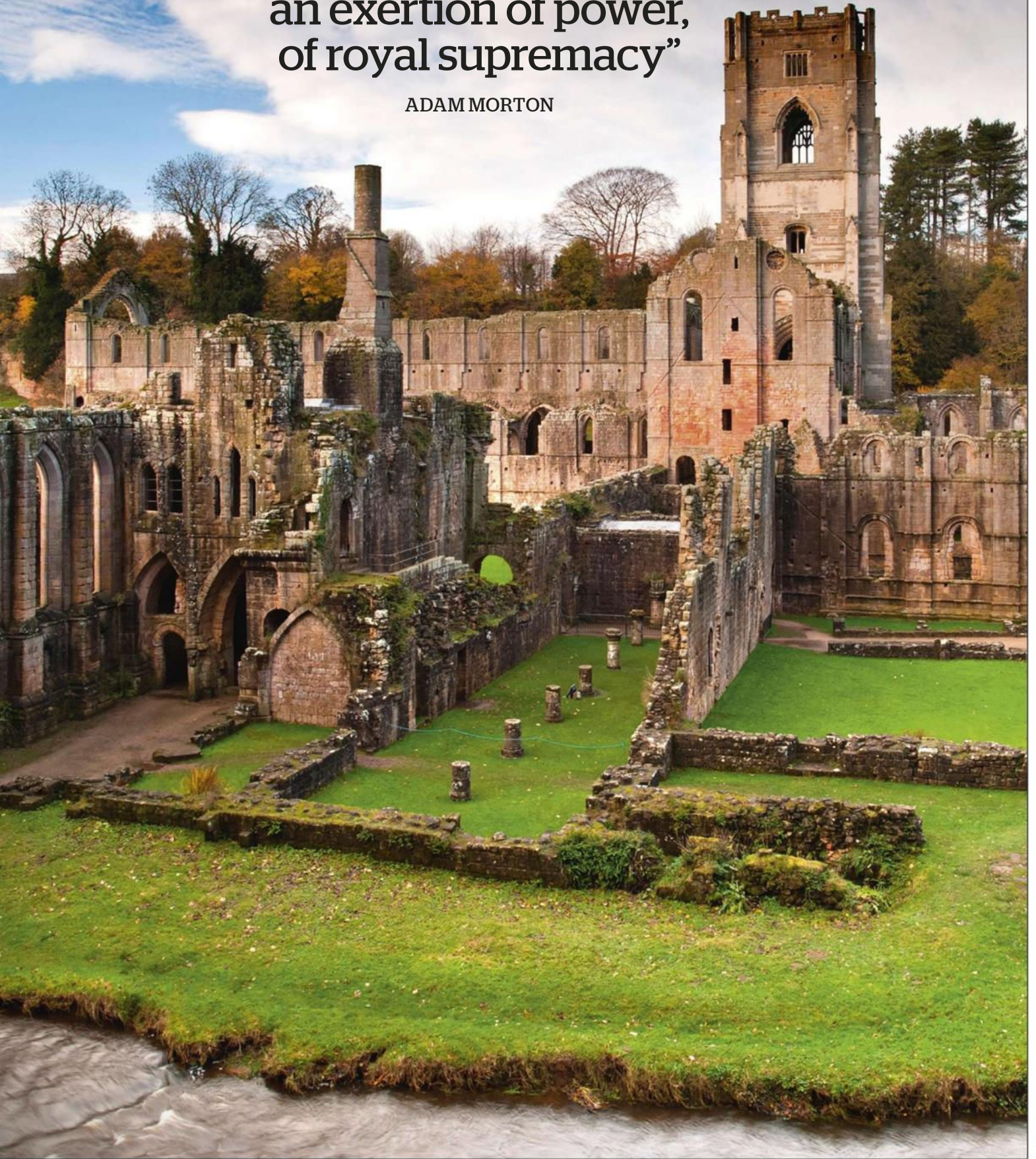


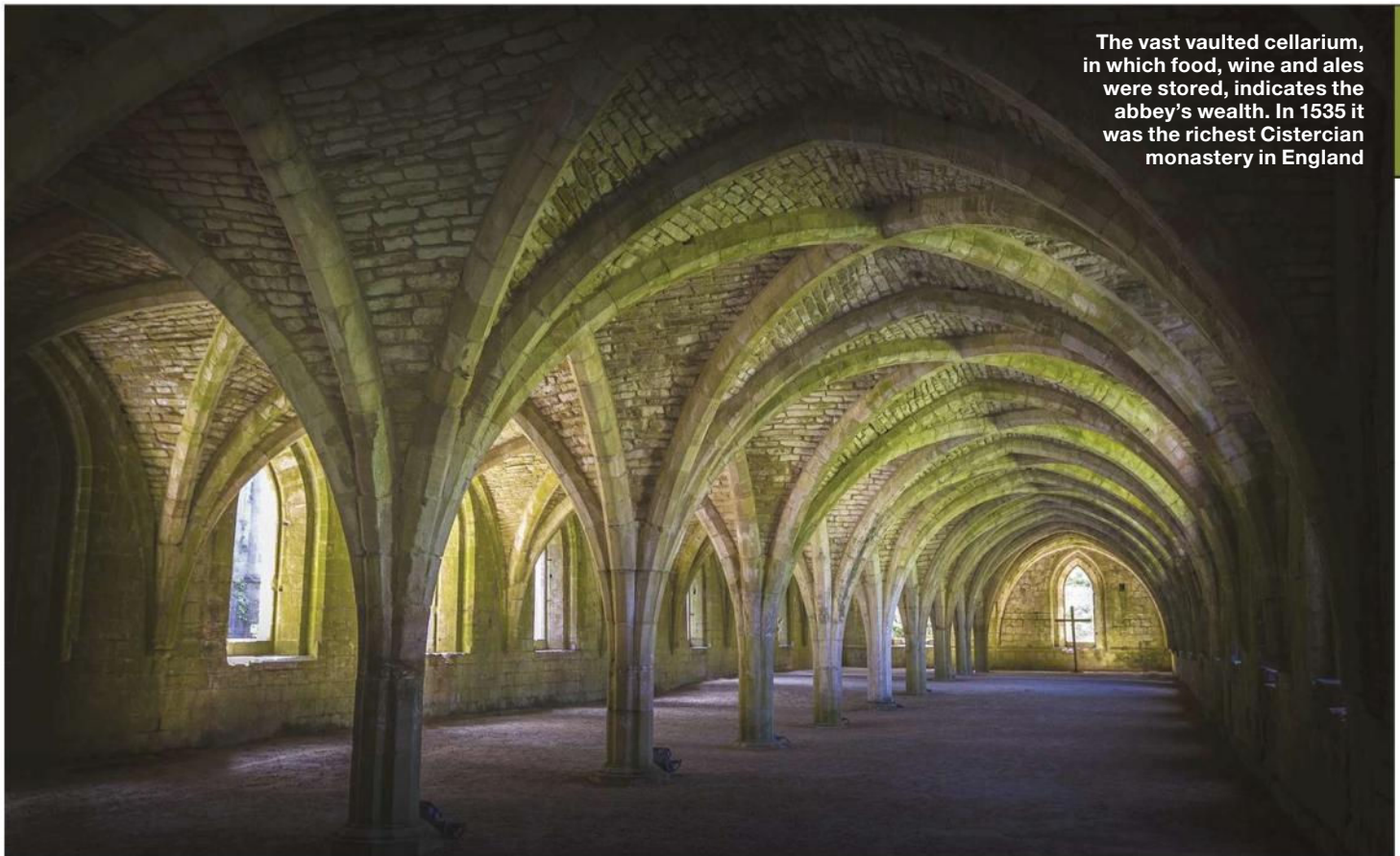
The ruins of Fountains Abbey in North Yorkshire. Henry's motives when dismantling such monasteries "were much more complex than pure revenge or pure avarice alone", says Adam Morton

ALAMY

“The Dissolution was
an exertion of power,
of royal supremacy”

ADAM MORTON





The vast vaulted cellarium, in which food, wine and ales were stored, indicates the abbey's wealth. In 1535 it was the richest Cistercian monastery in England

And what do iconoclasts do? They break superstition and deliver the word to their people. His own motivations were much more complex than pure revenge or pure avarice alone."

Cromwell's campaign

As we step inside the ruins, Morton explains the methods of Cromwell and his men. The *Valor Ecclesiasticus* was a crucial tool: a survey to discover how rich each monastery was – and how immoral the behaviour of its residents. "The ability to commission a report of that size tells us of Henry's will for royal supremacy," says Morton. It was a huge undertaking. And for Cromwell "it was particularly opportunistic. When it came to persuading parliament and the populace that these places should be closed, he made the exceptional seem the norm. He found the juiciest stories, the juiciest examples of corruption, and would say: 'These people are all like this.'"

Indeed, a 1535 investigation by a pair of royal commissioners into the moral code being applied at Fountains ended with eight

members of the community being charged with immoral acts including self-abuse, affairs with women both married and single, and sodomy with young boys – exactly the kind of juicy stories on which Henry's loyal confidant could go to town.

While delivering this programme of political spin, Cromwell and his men also applied scare tactics to the monasteries themselves. "The abbot and the monks would have experienced a huge exertion of pressure," explains Morton, "placing them under a psychological strain. Their obedience was being questioned. Do you accept the royal supremacy? If you don't, does that mean you're a traitor?"

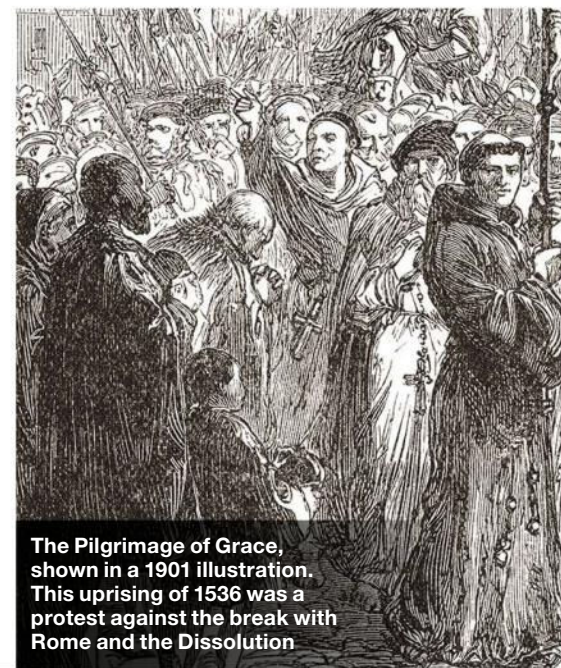
"Houses were visited by Cromwell's men, who applied pressure for closure. They called people to interviews. They publicly demanded loyalty. In the early stages of closure, the crown was looking for those monasteries where the resistance wasn't going to be the most acute. It was pushing a policy of voluntary surrender – getting the abbot to surrender the monastery to the crown.

"The more educated and confident could

ask whether it was technically legal. Who actually owned the monasteries? Who owned the founders' rights? And does the state have the right to run roughshod over them? This is why psychological pressure was really important. Cromwell was essentially trying to get around things by forcing people to give up the monasteries."

Two years after the 1536 act of parliament that legitimised the first wave of closures, the

ALAMY



The Pilgrimage of Grace, shown in a 1901 illustration. This uprising of 1536 was a protest against the break with Rome and the Dissolution

"CROMWELL MADE THE EXCEPTIONAL SEEM THE NORM. HE FOUND THE JUICIEST STORIES, THE JUICIEST EXAMPLES OF CORRUPTION"

campaign was stepped up with the appointment of Richard Ingworth. "He was – and I'm looking for a non-partisan word here – an effective administrator," says Morton. "He closed a lot of the larger monasteries without the sanction of parliament, before the bill to do so was actually passed."

Rebellion against reformation

The Dissolution was not welcomed. Not only was the Catholic church very popular, but the monasteries also performed numerous functions for communities, providing education, charity, medical facilities and hospitality for passing travellers. Their intended closures were opposed for more than just religious reasons. "Early-modern people generally didn't like novelty, they didn't like change. So something as destructive as the Dissolution was very, very hard to sell to them."

Here, in the north of England, there was open dissent – the 'Pilgrimage of Grace' – not just against the philosophical justification for the Dissolution but also against the physical dismantling of the monasteries.

"There is a case to be made that the Pilgrimage of Grace was the most significant rebellion in England faced by the Tudor monarchs," declares Morton. "Estimates suggest that between 30,000 and 50,000 people were involved. In the first instance, Henry was forced to negotiate, to placate the rebels. There wasn't a standing army in the

VISIT

Fountains Abbey



Fountains, Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 3DY
● fountainsabbey.org.uk

16th century. The state didn't have the power to deal with that many people.

"The response was emotional, above anything else. It was a sense of loss. Rebellions in this period were fundamentally conservative. We think of popular revolt in a very 19th or 20th-century way, about pushing for change. But rebellion in this earlier period was almost always triggered by a breach of custom – by the state doing something unprecedented. These people rebelled *against* change. They wanted things to go back." And once the king had successfully placated the rebels, many of the ringleaders were publicly executed. "It was a huge display of Henry's displeasure and of his power," says Morton. "This was royal supremacy."

After just five years, 800 monasteries had been closed and the crown had grabbed their assets. Increasingly, though, to fund overseas wars Henry sold off the land to private individuals who, as a result, climbed the social ladder. In 1540, one year after its abbot and 30 monks were pensioned off, the Fountains estate was sold to the merchant Sir Richard Gresham, who promptly peddled some of the fabric of the abbey for building materials. The crown had already melted down the valuable lead from its roofs and pipes, while a subsequent owner used the abbey's stonework to build Fountains Hall.

As we walk back up the hill we glance back at the abbey – a victim of short-termism and plunder, but somehow defiant in the low February sun. It now stands as a memorial to a time when the fabric of English religious life changed forever. **H**



Historical advisor: **Dr Adam Morton** (left), lecturer in the history of Britain at Newcastle University.
Words: Nige Tassell

THE DISSOLUTION FIVE MORE PLACES TO EXPLORE

1 Bath Abbey SOMERSET

Where a king's work was undone

Bath Priory was surrendered to the crown in 1539 during the Dissolution, after which it was stripped of its fabric and abandoned. In 1574, Elizabeth I sought to repair the damage caused by her father's campaign, and ordered that funds be raised to restore the building to its former glory.

bathabbey.org

2 Furness Abbey CUMBRIA

Where the ruins run red

This 12th-century abbey at the northern edge of Barrow-in-Furness was England's second-richest Cistercian monastery after Fountains Abbey. Built from red sandstone in a shallow valley, it's the subject of the William Wordsworth poem *At Furness Abbey*, where because of "rash undoing / Man left this Structure to become Time's prey".

english-heritage.org.uk

3 Glastonbury Abbey SOMERSET

Where an abbot met a grisly end

Destroyed by fire in the 12th century but quickly rebuilt, Glastonbury became the richest abbey in England after Westminster. Its last abbot resisted the raid on its valuables during the Dissolution, and was hanged, drawn and quartered on nearby Glastonbury Tor, reputedly for treason.

glastonburyabbey.com

4 Leicester Abbey

Where "unnatural vice" occurred

Officially known as the Abbey of St Mary de Pratish, Leicester Abbey was very much in decline by the time of the Dissolution thanks to mismanagement by successive abbots. The *Valor Ecclesiasticus* made reference to "adultery and unnatural vice" here, and not even the attempted bribery of Thomas Cromwell could halt its closure in 1538. The outlines of the foundations can be seen in Abbey Park.

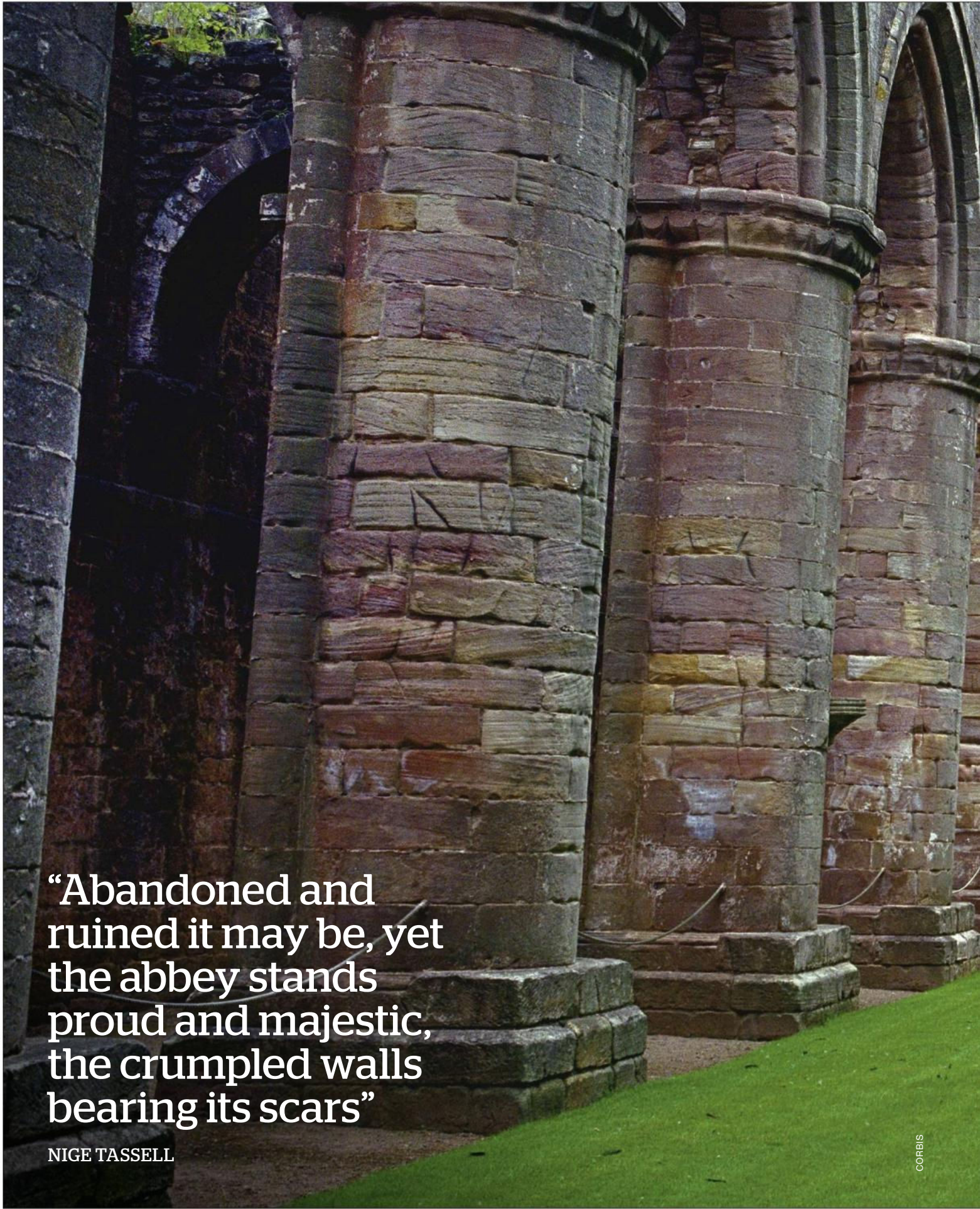
leicester.gov.uk

5 Walsingham Priory NORFOLK

Where the pilgrims flocked

Home to a shrine of the Virgin Mary, for centuries Walsingham was a popular destination for pilgrims, among them six kings – including Henry VIII himself. However, the shrine was removed during the Dissolution, the priory largely dismantled and the site then sold by Henry for £90. walsinghamabbey.com





“Abandoned and
ruined it may be, yet
the abbey stands
proud and majestic,
the crumpled walls
bearing its scars”

NIGE TASSELL

CORBIS



Fountains Abbey and the Studley Royal Water Garden is a 273-hectare National Trust estate which sits near the River Skell in North Yorkshire

9

The rise of the factory

Simon Thurley visits **Cromford Mills**, where Richard Arkwright, through his determination, inventiveness and luck made a historical breakthrough, giving birth to the modern factory system

The Derwent valley is an unlikely place to find a World Heritage Site but it was here, in the deep valleys of Derbyshire, that the modern factory system was invented. More specifically it was here at Cromford where Richard Arkwright set up his first water-powered mills – a breakthrough of the modern world.

Arkwright's personality, I think, still pervades Cromford. He started life as a wig maker, but became interested in spinning technology and through his inventiveness, determination, business acumen, luck (and some low cunning) ended up with an impressive capital of over £200,000, some 5,000 employees, a knighthood and the post of high sheriff of Derbyshire.

Invention was the thing that drove Britain's economy in the late 18th century, and although Arkwright's claim to have invented the water frame was challenged by various other entrepreneurs, his cotton spinning machine was one of the inventions that laid the foundations for Britain's later industrialisation. It's not surprising, then, that when you stand in the courtyard of Cromford Mills you feel as if you are in a fortress – a place carefully designed to keep prying eyes away from cutting-edge technology; a place where ruthlessly guarded industrial secrets were kept.

This paranoia is only apparent from the outside of Cromford Mills, which have sheer brick walls and no ground-floor windows. They are entered through a gatehouse, forbidding and austere – like a Napoleonic fort. But when you are in the great courtyard

the mills are a charming spot, and it is hard, at first glance, to see what was so new. This, in part, is because much of Arkwright's achievement was the system he used to manufacture yarn, rather than just the buildings and plant he designed. The textile industry was very dispersed in the early 18th century with individual workers undertaking parts of the process in isolation and selling their products on. What the factory did was bring people to a single place where they could be organised into an efficient workforce.

It also mechanised a large part of their work. Richard Arkwright used technology that had been successfully tried out in Derby to spin silk using the power of a waterwheel. But he wanted to spin cotton yarn, a far more complex task, and to do so he invented a spinning machine called the water frame. Some of these frames could have nearly a hundred spindles working continuously under the supervision of a relatively unskilled person. It was this combination of machinery, power and semi-skilled labour that allowed Arkwright to mass-produce cotton.

The mills at Cromford, the first of which was built in 1771, were designed to take this new machinery and transmit power from the nearby Bonsall Brook and Cromford sough (an underground channel designed to drain water) to the spinning machines as efficiently as possible. These watercourses were carefully chosen as they never dried up and were too fast-flowing to freeze.

The spinning machines determined the size and shape of the first mills. Two frames could sit side by side in a 30ft-wide building.



Simon Thurley at Cromford Mills in Derbyshire. It was here, in 1771, that Richard Arkwright set up his first water-powered mills, "bringing people to a single place where they could be organised into an efficient workforce"

Photography by Mike Abrahams

MIKE ABRAHAMS

A man with short grey hair, wearing a tan blazer over a light blue checkered shirt and tan trousers, stands on a stone ledge next to a canal. Behind him is a large, multi-story stone mill building with a gabled roof and two crosses on the wall. The canal reflects the building and the sky. In the background, there are green hills and trees.

“Cromford Mills
was a place where
ruthlessly guarded
industrial secrets
were kept”

SIMON THURLEY



Simon Thurley hails Cromford Mills as “a breakthrough of the modern world”



The watercourses supplying Cromford Mills were too fast-flowing to freeze

The mill was restricted to 100ft in length – any longer and the timber drives that turned the machines began to lose their potency.

Architecturally the language is familiar to us. With eyes half closed the big mills, with their sash windows, look like an impressive Georgian terrace in London, Liverpool or Bristol. But sashes that were good for domestic use also offered lots of light for the fiddly business of threading up the yarns. Privies were built for the workers and Arkwright’s second mill had a hot air heating system for winter use.

“THIS COMBINATION OF MACHINERY, POWER AND SEMI-SKILLED LABOUR ALLOWED ARKWRIGHT TO MASS-PRODUCE COTTON”

The wheels ceased to turn at Cromford long ago, but a trip to Quarry Bank Mill in Styal in Cheshire gives some sense of what it must have been like. This particular mill was founded in 1784 and the iron waterwheel that was installed in 1816–20 was the world’s largest. It was noisy and dangerous work. Fire was an ever-present risk and lamps and candles often ignited the cotton dust, reducing mills to piles of smoking rubble.

Back at Cromford the massive mill buildings with their forbidding exteriors must have been a shock to contemporary visitors. Especially as they were built near the small hamlet of Cromford which, in 1770, was tiny and rural. It was so rural, in fact, that there were not enough people living in it to staff Arkwright’s factories. The first mill needed 200 people, working in 12-hour shifts, to keep it powered-up.

In 1776 Arkwright built a street of houses for his workers. They were three stories high, and the top floors were weaving lofts. This allowed the men to weave cotton at home while the women and children went to work in the factories. The street now belongs to the Landmark Trust and it is amazing to spend a few days in one of Arkwright’s houses, integral pigsty and all.

Arkwright soon built the village a chapel, a hotel, a corn mill and he, himself, was to have a large house overlooking his enterprise. His model was the country estate where landlords housed their workers in tight-knit communities.

By 1797 there were some 900 cotton mills in England, a third of which were of the Arkwright type. A few had steam engines attached, but these were to pump water back through the system, restocking reservoirs so to keep the mill wheels turning.

It wasn’t until Boulton and Watt invented a reliable rotary steam engine that it became feasible to power a textile mill by an engine. The Piccadilly Mill in Manchester was the first of these, in 1789. The advent of steam power released the mills from the geography of fast-flowing rivers and allowed them to cluster in Manchester. By 1800 there were more than 40 coal-powered mills in the area.

VISIT
Cromford Mills



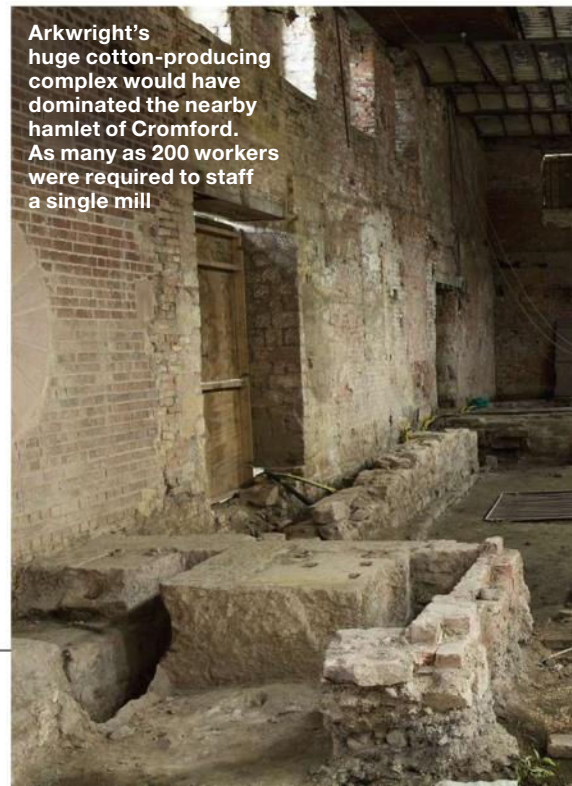
Cromford Mills, Mill Lane, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3RQ
● arkwrightsociety.org.uk

This heralded the second phase of the industrial revolution: a switch from traditional organic power sources to mineral power. With it disappeared the relatively idyllic rural life associated with Cromford. The hard-edged personal misery of the industrial revolution was born. **II**

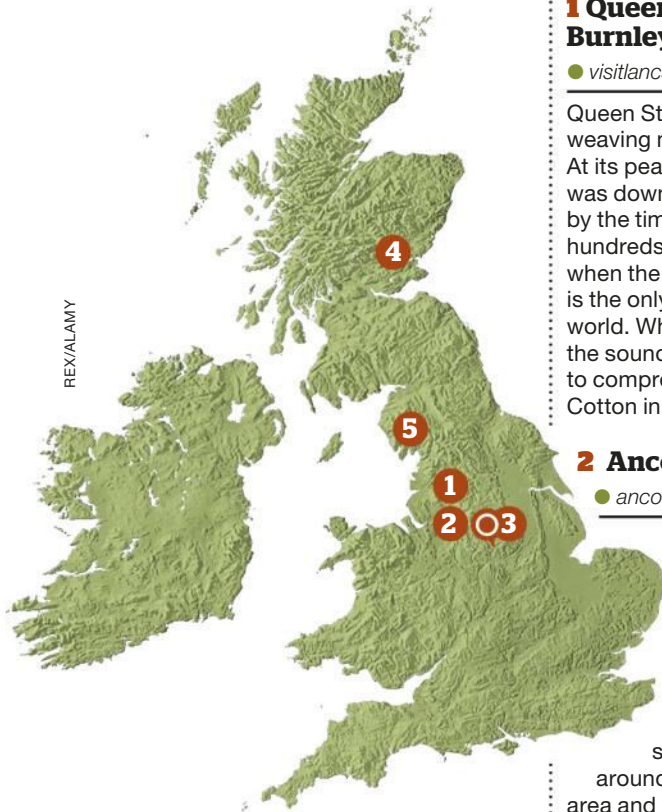
Simon Thurley is the former chief executive of English Heritage. His books include *The Building of England* (HarperCollins, 2013)

MIKE ABRAHAMS

Arkwright’s huge cotton-producing complex would have dominated the nearby hamlet of Cromford. As many as 200 workers were required to staff a single mill



THE RISE OF THE FACTORY: FIVE MORE PLACES TO EXPLORE



REX/ALAMY

 **Cromford, Derbyshire**

ON THE PODCAST

Listen to Simon Thurley discuss industrialisation on his visit to Cromford Mills
► historyextra.com/bbchistory magazine/podcasts

1 Queen Street Textile Museum, Burnley

● visitlancashire.com/things-to-do

Queen Street Mill is a late Victorian cotton weaving mill powered by a steam engine. At its peak it contained 1,266 looms but was down to operating fewer than 400 by the time it closed in 1982. There were hundreds of such businesses in England when the mill was first built but today it is the only steam-powered mill left in the world. When the looms are powered up the sound is deafening and it is possible to comprehend the sheer power of King Cotton in the British industrial revolution.

2 Ancoats Mills, Manchester

● ancoatsbpt.co.uk

A&G Murray Mills in Ancoats, Manchester are worth quite a long detour to see, though they are now converted into fashionable flats. They were built between 1798 and 1806 and are the most important early steam-powered cotton mills to survive. By 1815 they employed around 1,200 people. Walk around the area and you can not only see the vast 'dark satanic mills' themselves but the canals that brought the coal for the engines, as well as some surviving areas of workers' housing.



Ancoats was once a powerhouse of the industrial revolution

3 Masson Mill, Derbyshire

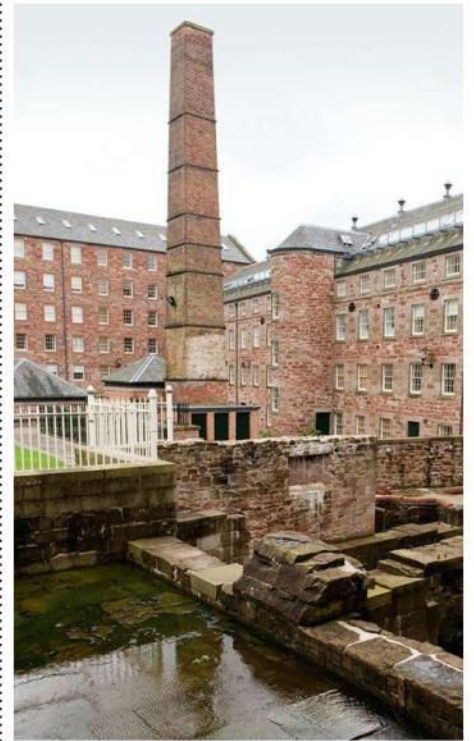
● massonmills.co.uk

Masson Mill was Sir Richard Arkwright's second mill complex. On the river Derwent, it was a showplace – architecturally more pretentious than his first mills at Cromford. Affluent touches like the Venetian windows on the central bay show the increasing wealth and success of his rapidly growing business. Today, the mills contain some early cotton machinery including some very old working looms. Masson Mill also boasts the largest bobbin collection in the world!

4 Stanley Mills, Perthshire

● historic-scotland.gov.uk

Arkwright's enterprises were a magnet for other entrepreneurs and in 1785 Scottish investors persuaded him to set up a mill on the river Tay near Perth. The buildings survive, despite a chequered history, and are among the most impressive remains of the water-powered phase of late 18th-century industrialisation. Like Cromford there is also a workers' village, built in the 1880s, and it is worthwhile walking round this to get a flavour of the times.



The impressive remains of Arkwright's Stanley Mills on the banks of the river Tay

5 Stott Park Bobbin Mill, Cumbria

● english-heritage.org.uk

The explosion of cotton mills stimulated a large number of supporting industries. One of these was the manufacture of bobbins for storing the spun cotton yarn. When a mill might be running up to 2,000 spindles at any time, tens of millions of timber bobbins were required. Stott Park Bobbin Mill is a rare survivor, a mill where timber bobbins are still manufactured. It was built in 1835 and at the peak of the cotton business it was making around 250,000 bobbins a week.



EXOTIC PLACES

Cartagena de Indias, Colombia



by **Miranda Kaufmann**

Seduced by an intoxicating fusion of cultures, Miranda describes the colour, music and history of this former Spanish colonial city

I've only visited Cartagena de Indias once, but it cast an enduring spell on me. I arrived in the old walled city after dark. Wandering past Spanish colonial houses, their balconies overflowing with bright pink bougainvillea, I was seduced by the music echoing through the cobbled streets. Like the city itself, the music was a fusion of cultures: the dancers below the statue of Simón Bolívar (Venezuelan leader, and president of Gran Colombia from 1819–30) moved to the sounds of African drumbeats and South American pipes.

Standing beneath the statue of India Catalina – outside the city wall – it's hard not to be reminded that indigenous peoples inhabited this area for some 5,000 years before the Spanish arrived. Catalina was the daughter of a Kalamari chieftain, and was captured in 1509. She was baptised and learnt Spanish, later acting as a translator for Pedro de Heredia when he founded the city in 1533. The help she gave this conquistador, who plundered the wealth of her people, still divides opinion as to whether she should be remembered as a heroine or a traitor.

Cartagena became one of the richest trading ports in Spanish America – gold and silver mined from across the continent was loaded into galleons here en route to Spain. It was also one of two ports authorised by the Spanish crown to trade in enslaved Africans. At the peak of the trade, at least 1,000 slaves were sold in the triangular Plaza de las Coches – now a popular tourist hub, lined with sweet stalls – every month.

Saint Pedro Claver (1581–1654), the self-proclaimed 'perpetual slave of the Ethiopians', who ministered to newly arrived captives with his team of multilingual African interpreters, is still widely celebrated in the city. Just a short walk from the Plaza de las Coches is a statue (below) of him helping an enslaved Angolan – it stands outside the eponymous church where his remains can be found in a glass case set within its high altar. Head to the church museum

for artwork and information about the saint.

Canonised in 1888, Claver worked in Cartagena for more than 30 years after his ordination in 1622, baptising more than 300,000 slaves.

From 1610 Cartagena was one of three Inquisition tribunals in the Americas. The Palacio de Inquisition, which was finished in 1770, has an instructive, if gruesome, display of the torture equipment deployed to weed out heretics and witches. Don't miss the small window with a cross on top, just around the corner from the entrance. This was where people were denounced as heretics by their enemies.

Cartagena's riches made it a prime target for pirates.

In 1586, Sir Francis Drake sacked the city and extracted a ransom of 110,000 ducats, having seriously delayed the completion of the cathedral with his cannonballs.

The building was finally finished in 1612 and is well worth a visit.

In 1697,

French commander Bernard Desjean's attack on Cartagena left him rich enough to impress even Louis XIV. But English naval officer Edward Vernon was not so lucky. In 1741 his large-scale assault on the city ended in failure when Admiral Blas de Lezo successfully drove away the English fleet. Known as the 'Half-Man', De Lezo only had one arm, one leg and one eye. He lost his other leg in this action, dying shortly afterwards.

Blas de Lezo's statue stands before the Castillo San Felipe de Barajas, the most impressive part of the city's fortifications, which



A statue of the "widely celebrated" Pedro Claver with an Angolan slave



BRIDGEMAN/JENI NOTT

“Cartagena is a place where the past intermingles with the present; where anything can happen

ADVICE FOR TRAVELLERS

BEST TIME TO GO

Cartagena is a typically Caribbean average of 28°C year-round, but is drier between December and April. Head there on the last weekend of January to catch the Hay Festival (www.hayfestival.com/cartagena), in mid-March for the International Film Festival (ficcifestival.com/?idi=en), or 11 November for Independence Day celebrations.

GETTING THERE

Flights to Rafael Núñez International Airport, Cartagena de Indias go from London via Bogotá. It's a short ride by taxi from the airport to the city centre. If you have time, make Cartagena part of a longer exploration of South America, but remember it's safer to arrive there by air than by road.

WHAT TO PACK

Comfy shoes for walking and dancing. And a copy of *Love in the Time of Cholera* or *Love and other Demons* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

WHAT TO BRING BACK

Cigars. Colombian coffee.

READERS' VIEWS

Visit the Museum of the Inquisition. Horrifying instruments of torture in a charming little house.

@cjr1968

Be sure to see the walled city, San Felipe's Fort, Rosario's Islands

@carlosmendezcal



The impressive fortifications of Castillo San Felipe de Barajas were needed to keep pirates at bay, but the city was still raided on several occasions

have gained Unesco World Heritage Site status. Gazing at this fortress, one can see just how much it took to keep pirates at bay.

Cartagena declared independence from Spain on 11 November 1811 and after a decade of warfare, the city's freedom was secured. Simón Bolívar wrote his *Cartagena Manifesto* here in 1812, and went on to launch his invasion of Venezuela with the city's backing the following year. As recorded in an inscription below his equestrian statue in the leafy Plaza de Bolívar, he later

remarked: "If Caracas gave me life, Cartagena gave me glory."

Over the last century, the magic of Cartagena has inspired resident artists such as Alejandro Obregon, and writers such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez, who called Cartagena a place of "amethyst afternoons and nights of antic breezes". As you inhale the city's air, scenes from his novels will waft around you.

What I love most about Cartagena is that it is a place where the past intermingles with the present; where anything can happen. It's a place that inspires chance encounters. I met a local

historian in the street who took me on a tour of the city, which ended in a cigar-rolling factory with a glass of whisky!

The framed sketch of a galleon docking in Cartagena, bought in the street for a few pesos and now hanging on my wall, entreats me to return one day. H

Dr Miranda Kaufmann is a historian and journalist
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Read more about Miranda's experiences in Cartagena at historyextra.com/bbchistorymagazine/cartagena

EXOTIC PLACES

Penang, Malaysia



by Susan Law

Affectionately known as the pearl of the orient, Penang, where east and west collide gloriously, is Susan Law's favourite place

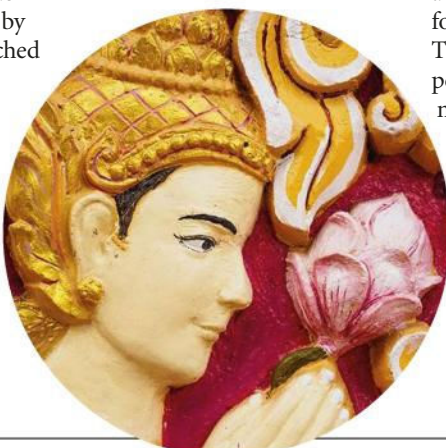
My first glimpse of Penang was from the ferry at dusk – a shadowy presence across a shimmering expanse of inky sea. As we got closer, the first buildings began to take shape. Ramshackle wooden houses sprawled along the waterfront, while an imposing white stone facade stretched away to the right. Behind them was a lone concrete skyscraper, and the hills in the distance were studded with twinkling lights.

Later my taxi sped through the streets of George Town, along busy streets of Chinese shops with flashing neon signs, passing ornate temples and mysterious crumbling mansions fronted by vast green lawns. When I reached the faded grandeur of the Eastern & Oriental (E&O) Hotel on Lebuhr Farquhar, with its fraying rattan chairs and creaky ceiling fans, I felt as if I was stepping back in time to its colonial heyday.

That was several decades ago, but it is Penang's intriguing blend of past and

present, east and west, that has lured me back many times since, to this truly beautiful tropical island off the coast of Malaysia known as the Pearl of the Orient. Many tourists, superglued to their sun-loungers in luxury resorts along the palm-fringed beaches of Batu Ferringhi, never see the real Penang. But for curious travellers there is a fascinating history to unearth in this vivid kaleidoscope of Malay, European, Chinese and Indian cultures.

Discovered by 16th-century Portuguese spice traders seeking fresh water, Penang quickly grew into a thriving port after the arrival of English captain Francis Light in 1786, who claimed it for



Kek Lok Si Buddhist Temple is decorated with thousands of Chinese lanterns on festival days and brightly lit for 30 nights following Chinese New Year

the crown. He established Fort Cornwallis and, folklore has it, persuaded men to clear land for settlement by firing silver coins from his ship's cannons into dense jungle.

His elegant riverside mansion, Suffolk House, was home to successive governors from 1810, and hosted discussions on the founding of nearby Singapore. The island grew rich as a trading post for commodities like rubber, nutmeg and coconuts, later surviving Japanese occupation in the Second World War. It has been part of Malaysia since 1963.

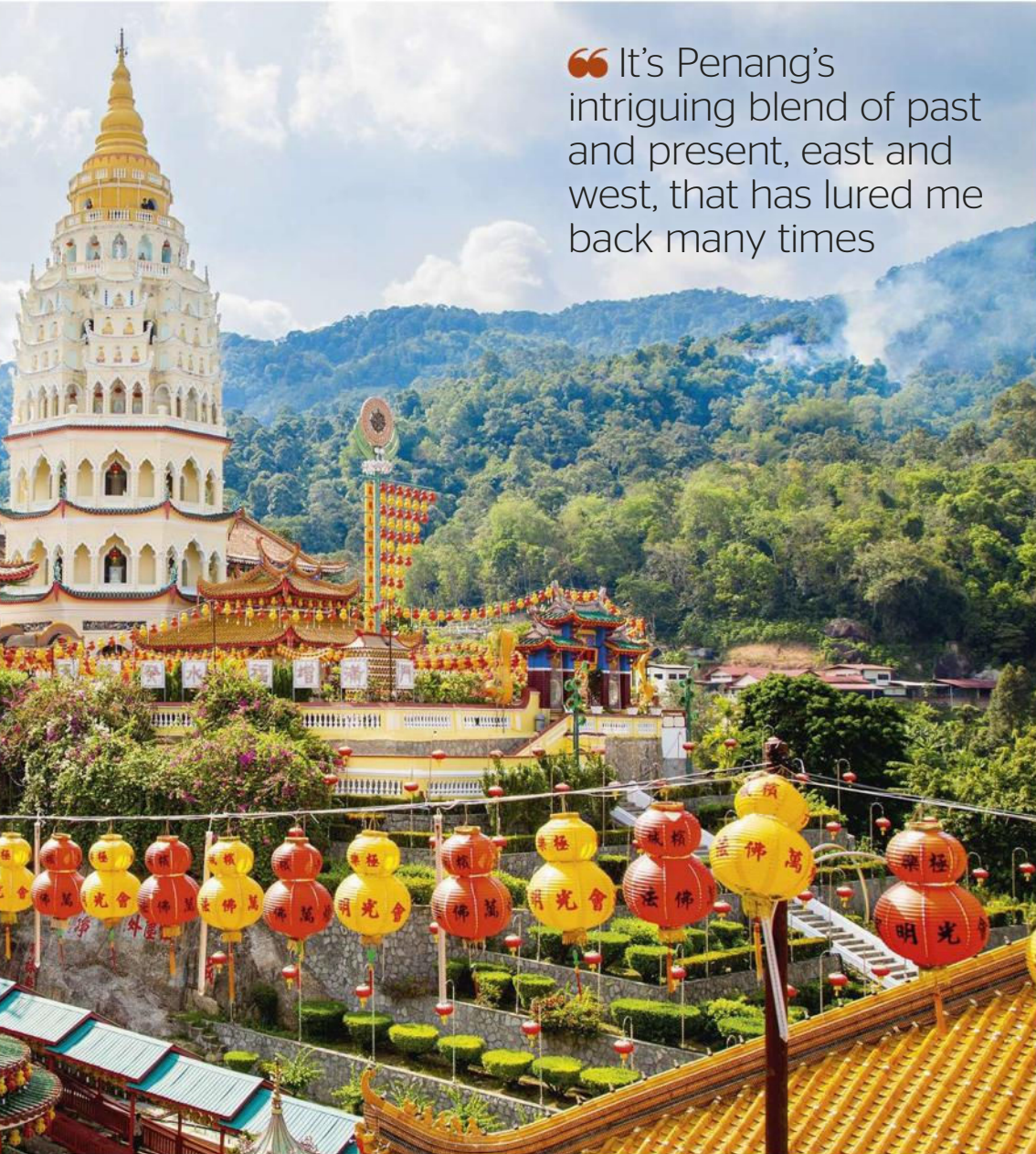
A wall relief depicting Buddha at the Dhammikarama Temple, George Town's Burmese temple

My parents lived on Penang for several years, so I visited often, seeking out new places and revisiting old haunts. Since my first encounter, the E&O has been spruced up, as have many of the island's historic buildings, in a major restoration programme, bringing their decaying skeletons back to life after a century of neglect. In 1999 George Town was listed as one of the world's 100 most endangered places and in 2008 became a Unesco World Heritage Site.

George Town is a compact little city you can easily explore on foot, though a trishaw ride is the most relaxing way to get around in the heat, as you sit back and take in the sights while being pedalled along at a leisurely pace. Everywhere street names tell the



CORBIS



“It’s Penang’s intriguing blend of past and present, east and west, that has lured me back many times

story of past settlers – from Downing Street by the harbour or Jalan Burma (Burmah Road), to Armenian Street where the 1867 Penang Riots erupted when the Red and White Flag secret societies fought for control.

In Cannon Square the striking Khoo Kongsi, with its ornate curved red roof, is a grand Chinese clan-house complex dating back to 1898 that’s usually packed with visitors. In nearby old Pitt Street, you’ll find four major religions co-existing as neighbours, including Kapitan Keling Mosque that was founded in 1801 for Indian traders and the sandalwood-scented Goddess of Mercy Temple guarded by stone dragons.

Further afield, I always love a trip on the little funicular railway

up the cooler wooded slopes of Penang Hill, with its scattered colonial buildings and spectacular views to the mainland. Kek Lok Si Buddhist temple has a timeless charm, laid out over 10 acres of hillside and decorated with thousands of coloured lanterns on festival days. Also worth visiting are the Snake Temple (resident pit vipers doze on the altar) and the traditional Malay village Kampong Seronok.

The food is as richly diverse as the people and the island is renowned for its street hawker stalls. Try the traditional fried rice *nasi goreng* (my favourite) or searing hot *beef rendang* if you dare. And, for a really unexpected taste, there’s durian fruit, which can be a shock to novices

who either love or loathe its pungent creamy flesh.

Penang is full of wonderful surprises, with the comfortably familiar and the beautifully exotic jostling for attention round every corner. Each time I return, I’m struck again by its amazing contrasts – and relieved to see another fragment of its colourful past has been rescued for the future. ■

Dr Susan Law is a journalist and historian whose latest book is *Through the Keyhole: Sex, Scandal and the Secret Life of the Country House* (History Press, 2015)

Read more about Susan’s experiences in Penang at historyextra.com/bbchistorymagazine/penang

ADVICE FOR TRAVELLERS

BEST TIME TO GO

February is one of the best times to visit as it’s the driest month and you can also join in the Chinese New Year celebrations. There are many festivals all year round – look out for international dragon boat racing in May.

GETTING THERE

Choose between a short ferry trip from Butterworth on the mainland, driving over the toll bridge or flying in to Penang International Airport (10 miles south of George Town), which serves most major airlines.

WHAT TO TAKE

Temperatures average 30 degrees (dropping slightly in November–December) and it can feel very humid, so make sure you take plenty of light cotton clothing – a sun hat is also essential. And don’t forget your camera.

WHAT TO BRING BACK

You can buy lots of traditional handicrafts like the intricately dyed batik cloth (how about a colourful sarong?) or beaded shoes. Try the many goldsmiths’ shops for distinctive 22-carat gold jewellery.

READERS’ VIEWS

Hear colonial echoes around Georgetown, see elite life at Pinang Peranakan Mansion and taste a cocktail at the Eastern & Oriental @howardbatey



EXOTIC PLACES

Bali, Indonesia



By Arthur Cotterell

For those with a penchant for hot historical breaks, Arthur explores a rare Hindu enclave in Indonesia, a tropical idyll studded with gem-like temples

My first visit to Bali five years ago was a huge culture shock. Though I had explored other Indonesian islands, nothing could prepare me for such a unique culture.

This beautiful island has weathered the storm of modern times rather well, and remains a cultural gem with an idyllic landscape. International tourism has certainly had an impact, but the Balinese people are infallibly friendly, and there is always something new to discover.

The beliefs of maritime south-east Asia find their focus in Bali. The island is known as a Hindu enclave in largely Muslim Indonesia, but the Balinese also piously respect their ancestors and carefully placate the indigenous spirits dwelling in the island. Nothing is considered to be inanimate, be it a stone, a tree or a motorcar. During the Hindu new year festival, reverence for machines is shown by adorning the bonnets of vehicles with the sacred cloth usually wrapped around the trunks of trees and prominent rocks.

Small offerings are placed outside doorways to divert the attention of malignant spirits. In paddy fields, similar offerings lie on

the ground next to shrines dedicated to Dewi Sri, the indigenous rice goddess, who long pre-dates the arrival of Hinduism. Along with the water goddess Dewi Danu, she guarantees prosperity and receives the gratitude of farmers.

In gardens, special altars are used for the worship of ancestors, believed to descend from Gunung Agung, Bali's highest volcano. From its summit gods and goddesses also come down to unroofed temples where, during festivals, they are fed and entertained by music and dance-drama. A Balinese temple has no forbidding rooms, blackened with incense and occupied by awe-inspiring images: in fact, they tend to avoid representations altogether.

Visitors to Bali are often baffled by the apparent absence

of religious formality. Yet hardly anywhere is without a temple or shrine, since few places lack divine significance. Indeed, this island barely 20 times larger than the Isle of Wight is dotted with more than 20,000 temples.

Some originated before the arrival of Hinduism. The 11th-century Pura Tegeh Koripan is the highest temple in Bali, near the summit of the extinct volcano Gunung Penulisan. Actually a hilltop complex of five temples now dedicated to Shiva, its original foundation certainly precedes the triumph of the Hindu faith, its altars displaying carved figures and even unhewn rock.

Bali's culture has been influenced by its larger neighbour to the west, Java, for over 10 centuries, since King Udayana married a Javan princess in the late 10th century. Her son Erlangga became king of eastern Java, and Balinese courts adopted the Javanese language. The architectural influences show in the 10th-century 'elephant cave' Goa Gajah, and the rock-hewn royal monuments at Gunung

A statue at the remains of Kerta Gosa, an 18th-century palace at Klungkung, the former capital of Bali

The 16th-century Pura Tanah Lot. "Watching the waves crash onto the rocks at the foot of this clifftop temple at sunset is a memorable way to end a day," says Arthur Cotterell



Kawi dating from 1080, both near Ubud in south-central Bali.

Three centuries later, in 1343, Java's dominance was cemented when Gajah Mada of the Javanese Majapahit dynasty conquered Bali. The island's capital moved to Gelgel and later to Klungkung in modern Semarapura, where the remains of the Kerta Gosa palace complex – built in the early 18th century and largely destroyed by the Dutch in 1908 – provide absorbing wandering.

CORBIS/ALAMY

“ Though it is barely 20 times larger than the Isle of Wight, Bali is dotted with more than 20,000 temples

ADVICE FOR TRAVELLERS

BEST TIME TO GO

Bali's dry season falls between April and September, when temperatures average around 27°C. Major Hindu rituals and festivals take place throughout the year, with additional street processions and offerings a regular occurrence.

GETTING THERE

Bali's only airport is Ngurah Rai International Airport (also known as Denpasar) but there is currently no direct flight to Bali from Europe. UK travellers can reach Bali via Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong or Bangkok.

WHAT TO PACK

The sun can be fierce, so it's sensible to carry a wide-brimmed hat or a parasol. Sunscreen is also a must, and insect repellent is useful.

WHAT TO BRING BACK

Beautiful wooden carvings and *ikat*, a woven silk or cotton cloth of dyed threads

READERS' VIEWS

I would definitely recommend the sacred monkey forest in Ubud – just don't hide your bananas from the monkeys!

Demi Pebbles Sarah Burkin

Visit the water gardens at Tirta Gangga and Pura Ulun Danu temple, Beratan Lake – both interesting and in beautiful locations
Lee Morton



Hindus fleeing the rise of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago in the 15th century flooded into Bali, and several of its most iconic temples date from the 15th and 16th centuries. Like Pura Tegeh Koripan, Pura Besakih, on the slopes of Gunung Agung, probably dates from prehistoric times, but has served as a Hindu temple since the Javan invasion of 1284; by the 15th century it was established as a major place of

worship and is now the holiest Hindu temple on the island.

Pura Tanah Lot, a 16th-century temple perched on a rocky outcrop off the south-west coast, is arguably Bali's most famous temple – as much for its visual appeal as its history. It was reputedly founded by Javanese saint Danghyang Nirartha, who is said to have achieved complete enlightenment at Pura Uluwatu in the southernmost peninsula. Watching the waves crash onto

the rocks at the foot of this clifftop temple at sunset is a memorable way to end a day.

Jawaharlal Nehru, who visited the island in the 1950s, called Bali “the morning of the world”. To me, it is the last paradise. **H**

Arthur Cotterell is author of *Bali: A Cultural History* (Signal, 2015)

Read more about Arthur's experiences at historyextra.com/bbchistorymagazine/bali

10

Life in the Bronze Age

Dr Francis Pryor and Charlotte Hodgman visit **Flag Fen** in Peterborough, a Bronze Age site that offers a unique insight into life in the Fens 3,500 years ago

The drive from Peterborough Station to Flag Fen crosses a former marshland, drained centuries ago and now covered with industrial buildings. But beneath the modern factories lie the remains of prehistoric settlements, says archaeologist Francis Pryor as he throws his battered Land Rover into gear.

Formerly an expert on Channel 4's *Time Team* – now a sheep farmer and author – Pryor has excavated much of Peterborough in his 40-year career. He is perhaps best known for his discovery of Flag Fen – a 3,500-year-old site comprising more than 60,000 vertical posts and 250,000 horizontal timbers that once formed a near 1km-long wooden causeway across the fens.

The site is the only place in the world where original Bronze Age timbers can be seen in their original location. And entering the darkened Preservation Hall you get a sense of just how truly remarkable the discovery is. Water drips constantly onto the Bronze Age posts and timbers that date to c1200–1100 BC – it is the waterlogged peat that has preserved the site for so long. The seemingly haphazard arrangement of the wood below the viewing platform hides a much more organised history.

“It’s difficult to imagine now, but the wood we see here once formed part of a huge walkway with a central platform,” says Pryor. “The sand and gravel still visible on the surface isn’t there by

chance – it was put there deliberately, probably to stop the wood becoming slippery in wet weather. This was clearly somewhere people visited regularly and, judging from the wealth of artefacts discovered during excavations, it had real spiritual significance. I believe it would have been the Bronze Age equivalent of a parish church, or even a cathedral, where people came to make offerings to the water.”

Changing beliefs

The period around 1500 BC (the middle-late Bronze Age) saw a new set of religious beliefs come into play, says Pryor, with huge centralised structures like Stonehenge abandoned in favour of localised religious sites like Flag Fen. Here, men, women and children would mark rites of passage – births, marriages, the completion of apprenticeships – with symbolic offerings.

“Flag Fen wasn’t a burial site, but it would have marked the passage to the next world,” says Pryor. “Mirrors didn’t exist until c500 BC so the only way people knew what they looked like was by looking at their reflection in still water. It must have been very powerful: water was a symbol of the self but also, beneath the surface, a symbol of death. “One thing we *do* know

about Bronze Age people is that they held their ceremonies at liminal zones, those at the boundaries. Flag Fen is liminal – you couldn’t have lived out here. It’s a watery wilderness in many respects.”

Some of the artefacts discovered during



An artificial lake covers, and protects, the remains of Flag Fen’s ceremonial platform



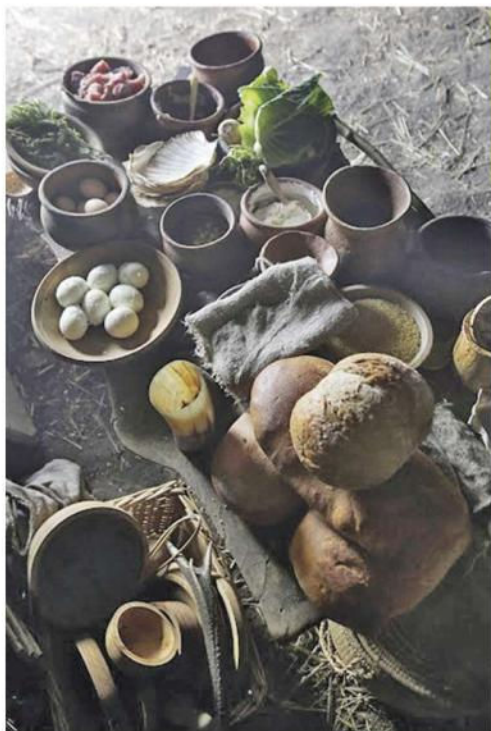
RAFAL MARCINKIEWICZ

“It’s time to re-educate people about what life in the Bronze Age was *really* like”

DR FRANCIS PRYOR

The reconstructed Bronze Age round-house at Flag Fen, complete with its insulating turfed and thatched roof





The Bronze Age diet was both healthy and tasty, according to Francis Pryor

excavation of the site are displayed in glass cases located outside the Preservation Hall. These give a fascinating, and often surprising, insight into the apparent sophistication of Bronze Age life.

A set of worker's tools (looking remarkably like a modern socket set), a quern stone for grinding corn and even a flesh hook (used for pulling joints of meat out of cauldrons) are all on show. Analysis of one piece of domestic pottery, a small bowl, apparently revealed evidence of a milky porridge. What is also apparent, from the pieces on display, is that almost all the items were intentionally broken or damaged before being cast into the water.

"And there is even evidence of Bronze Age trade, although not in the sense that we would understand it today," says Pryor. "We found items made of tin mined in central Europe: tin that was probably exchanged among the more powerful members of Bronze Age society for other items – perhaps on the marriage of a family member, for example. Coins don't turn up for another 1,000 years or so, but this was still trade of sorts."

Outside the chamber building, a small flock of sheep wanders the site. These are Soay sheep, a hardy breed that would have been bred in the Bronze Age, as bones uncovered at Flag Fen have revealed.

"FARMING WAS INTENSIVE. THESE WEREN'T PEOPLE SCRATCHING A LIVING; THEY WERE PROSPEROUS, CIVILISED PEOPLE"

The dyke where Pryor first discovered the site, in 1982 – quite literally stumbling upon it when he tripped over a piece of what he quickly recognised as Bronze Age timber – is still visible. And on the other side of the narrow bridge spanning the dyke is a reconstructed Bronze Age house. The roof of the circular dwelling is both thatched and turfed, as was the tradition 3,500 years ago – the turf insulating the house against the bitter cold. Inside, the building is dark, with no windows, but the space is surprisingly larger than expected.

"Thanks to excavations of Bronze Age settlements, we know now that the organisation of these houses followed the rotation of the sun," says Pryor. "Doorways faced south, with food prepared around a central hearth. The most important member of the household would have sat opposite the doorway, on the north side of the house – in the Bronze Age, this would probably have been the grandmother."

"People would have slept on the north and east sides of the house. Interestingly, when we have found Iron or Bronze Age burials, the bodies are always found on the north or east of the burial chamber – the side of sleep and darkness."

The remains of a Bronze Age eel trap is displayed outside the Preservation Hall – hams, sturgeon, and eels would have hung from the roof, smoking above the fire. The Bronze Age diet, it seems, was a healthy one, and tasty to boot, according to Pryor.

Farming the land

The reconstructed roundhouse – based on one excavated in Peterborough by Pryor in the 1970s – gives a real sense of life 3,500 years ago, but the nearest settlement to Flag Fen was in fact about 800m west of the site.

Houses weren't built near one another until the Iron Age, says Pryor, and in the Bronze Age, houses tended to be carefully spread out among the fields. "By 1500 BC," he continues, "we're seeing a landscape that was fully developed, with a network of roads covering Britain and rivers that were being navigated. In 2013, at Must Farm, two miles

VISIT

Flag Fen



The Droveaway, Northey Road, Peterborough PE6 7QJ

● vivacity-peterborough.com/museums-and-heritage/flag-fen

east of Flag Fen, a length of the river Nene was excavated. In just a 250m section, eight Bronze Age boats were found, presumably abandoned. Rivers must have been the Bronze Age equivalent of motorways: they would have been packed with people.

"The traditional idea of this period of history being one of subsistence agriculture – a family with a few dozen sheep and a couple of moth-eaten old cattle – is old hat. Farming was already intensive. We've found whole field systems, as well as yards where sheep would have been handled. As a sheep farmer I know that such areas were intended to handle hundreds, not handfuls, of sheep. These weren't people scratching a living; they were prosperous, civilised people."

But the Bronze Age was about more than farming and surviving, according to Pryor.



Flag Fen is home to a small flock of Soay sheep, a breed thought to have descended from those that once grazed in Bronze Age Britain

BRONZE AGE LIFE: FIVE MORE PLACES TO EXPLORE



The incredibly well-preserved timbers at Flag Fen are around 3,500 years old

People led remarkably rich lives with plenty of time for leisure and spiritual activity. They even, it seems, enjoyed a tipple.

"I believe people began drinking alcohol as early as 2500 BC," says Pryor. "After all, fermentation is a pretty basic process – it happens all the time. If you're a farmer

growing wheat and barley and your storage pit gets a bit wet, pretty soon you're going to get a beer of sorts.

"What's more, in around 2500 BC we start to see evidence of an extraordinary type of pottery, all over Europe – highly decorated mugs known as beakers. The average beaker holds around two pints and its decoration may well have signified one's family. These are not the sort of drinking vessels you'd use for a mug of river water!"

Other decorative items have been found during excavations at Flag Fen, including fragments of a bronze shield. But one of the most remarkable finds is a set of shears in a wooden box, dating to c600 BC – to shear sheep, one might assume, but Pryor has another interesting theory.

"Bronze Age sheep like the ones we have here at Flag Fen wouldn't have needed shearing – they shed their wool naturally. Which means the shears we found were probably used for trimming beards and clipping hair – for looking nice. Caring about one's personal appearance is not something many people would attribute to Bronze Age society, but I would argue that it formed part of everyday life."

An excited group of primary school children draped in 'Bronze Age' woollen capes borrowed from the visitor centre reminds us that Bronze Age history is now part of the National Curriculum – something Pryor campaigned passionately for. But the future of Flag Fen is far less certain: the site is under constant threat of drying out. Less than 10 per cent of the site has been dug, with an artificial lake created over the largest portion of the ceremonial platform, preserving the Bronze Age timbers, and the site's history, for future generations.

"It's time to re-educate people about what life in the Bronze Age was *really* like," says Pryor, "and dispel the age-old image of wool-clad people huddling around fires in mud and rain, like cavemen. It was a period of great domestic and spiritual change. Civilised life in Britain did not begin with the Roman occupation of AD 43". **H**



Historical advisor: Francis Pryor (left), author of *Home: A Time Traveller's Tales from Britain's Prehistory* (Allen Lane, 2014)
Words: Charlotte Hodgman

1 Dover Museum KENT Where a prehistoric boat is seen

In 1992, a Bronze Age boat was discovered during construction of the A20 between Folkestone and Dover. Thought to be around 3,500 years old, the vessel once carried cargos of supplies, livestock and passengers across the Channel, and is tangible evidence of Bronze Age trading. A 9.5m section of this, the world's oldest known seafaring boat, is on display.
dovermuseum.co.uk

2 Stonehenge WILTSHIRE Where a megalithic stone circle sits

Built in c2500 BC, Stonehenge was an important site of early pilgrimage until the early Bronze Age, when one of the greatest concentrations of round barrows in Britain was built in the surrounding area. The henge monument at Avebury, a 26-mile walk away, was built and altered between 2850–2200 BC but, like Stonehenge, the reason for its existence is still debated.
english-heritage.org.uk

3 Skara Brae ORKNEY Where burial mounds are preserved

Discovered by chance after a storm in 1850, the remains of the late Neolithic settlement at Skara Brae offer an insight into life between c3200 BC and c2200 BC, when the village was inhabited. Orkney itself boasts some 600 Bronze Age burial mounds, including a complex around the Ring of Brodgar, not far from Skara Brae.
orkney.com

4 Lynn Museum NORFOLK Where you'll see Bronze Age timbers

The remains of the Bronze Age timber circle discovered on Holme beach on the north Norfolk coast in 1998 are on show in Lynn Museum, along with a life-size replica. The wooden structure comprised 55 oak posts. In its centre was a huge upturned tree stump, which may have been used as part of a burial ritual.
museumsnorfolk.org.uk/lynn-museum

5 Great Orme Mines GWYNEDD Where copper was once mined

Mined for copper ores from nearly 4,000 years ago, some four miles of tunnels have been uncovered at Great Orme in Gwynedd. Visitors can explore its huge, awe-inspiring caverns and prehistoric landscapes, as well as view Bronze Age mining tools and artefacts.
greatormemines.info

11

The Jacobite uprisings

Professor Christopher Whatley and Charlotte Hodgman explore the strategically significant **Ruthven Barracks** in Badenoch, Scotland - a Highland fort built to suppress Jacobite rebellions in the 18th century

Perched high on a hill in the Spey valley, surrounded by mountains, Ruthven was once one of four infantry barracks built across the Highlands in an attempt by George I to put down further Scottish rebellions in the wake of the great Jacobite uprising of 1715.

The strategic position of the fortification, lying as it does at an important junction of military roads from Perth, Fort Augustus and Inverness, meant that Ruthven was a key stronghold for the British Army – and a target for rebelling Scots. But, despite being completed in 1721, Ruthven didn't see its first military action until 1745, when a 300-strong Jacobite force attempted to besiege the barracks. (Remarkably, it took just 14 Redcoats to repel the attack, with the loss of just one man.)

Although now ruined – little of the interior structure, and no visible flooring or roofing remains – the layout of Ruthven is still virtually as it was when it was first built. Once they have climbed the steep path to the barracks, visitors can see where the government soldiers stationed there would have slept – 10 men to a barrack-room and two to a bed – walk the small parade ground once used for drilling, and view the spot where the horses were stabled.

Craving power

The Jacobite rebellions against the crown were ultimately triggered by the so-called Glorious Revolution of 1688, when the Dutch prince William of Orange seized the English and Scottish thrones from the Stuart king James II and VII to become William III and II.



Jacobite aims included placing James Francis Edward Stuart on the thrones of Scotland and England

“The Stuarts had reigned in Scotland for centuries, and the Jacobites craved the reinstatement of the Stuart male line,” says Christopher Whatley, professor of Scottish history at the University of Dundee. “They championed the claim of the exiled James Francis Edward Stuart, son of the deposed James II and VII, the man after whom the movement was named [*Jacobus* being derived from the Latin form of James].

“What’s more, many Scots had been antagonised by King William’s imposition of Presbyterianism – a more austere form of Protestantism – as the Church of Scotland. Making James Francis Edward Stuart (the ‘Old Pretender’) king would herald changes to the practice of religion in Scotland.”

The Jacobite rebellions were also, says Whatley, a reaction to the union of Scotland and England in 1707. “The later Stuarts were not especially well loved, but the union was even less so,” he says. “Anti-unionism – and Scottish independence – was a strong component of support for Jacobitism in Scotland in the early 18th century.”

Yet Jacobitism was not a purely Scottish phenomenon. There were thousands of Jacobites in Ireland, too, many of whom were fired by a desire to return their country to Catholicism, and to free it from what they regarded as the shackles of Westminster political control.

English Jacobites were less militant than their Scottish counterparts, although there were substantial numbers of Jacobite sympathisers south of the border.

The rumblings of discontent and scattered episodes of unrest that had marked William’s reign in Scotland came to a head in September



Ruthven Barracks looms out of the mist from an isolated hilltop in the Scottish Highlands. The fortification was of great strategic importance to both the British Army and Jacobite forces during the 18th century

GETTY IMAGES/CROWN COPYRIGHT HISTORIC SCOTLAND-SCRAN



“The British government
felt it had to crush the
Jacobite insurgents once
and for all”

PROFESSOR CHRISTOPHER WHATLEY



A jubilant Bonnie Prince Charlie enters Edinburgh after the Jacobite victory at Prestonpans, September 1745

1715 when John Erskine, Earl of Mar raised the standard for the Old Pretender at Braemar, recognising him as James VIII of Scotland and James III of England.

Thousands of Jacobites flocked to the uprising, and there was great alarm in the corridors of power in London. Yet Mar was unable to capitalise on this momentum. With his army failing to inflict defeat on an outnumbered government force at the battle of Sheriffmuir in Perthshire on 13 November, his supporters began to lose faith in their chances of victory, and retreated north.

Victory turns sour

But all was not lost for the Jacobites. While Mar's army was fighting at Sheriffmuir, an expeditionary force from the Highlands had joined with Jacobites from northern England. The resulting battle of Preston, fought on 12 November, ended in a Jacobite victory. However, triumph soon turned sour when, after finding themselves trapped in Preston with no artillery or supplies, the Jacobite troops were forced to surrender. Many fled, while as many as 1,500 were taken prisoner. Around 40 were later executed, with the remainder transported to the American colonies.

"What the Jacobites needed was external support, from a friendly power like Sweden or Spain, which could provide funds,

ammunition and soldiers," say Whatley. "But in 1715, French king Louis XIV – who had been an enthusiastic supporter of James II and VII – died, so French backing was no longer guaranteed for that year's uprising. Add to that Mar's inadequate leadership and the strength and organisation of government forces, and you can see what the Jacobites were up against."

Further uprisings were planned between 1715 and 1745, with English Jacobites – attempting to capitalise on the fact that Britain and France were on opposing sides in the War of Austrian Succession – seeking to join forces with the French. Spanish troops landed in north-west Scotland in 1719, but were quickly defeated. Louis XIV's successor, Louis XV, authorised an invasion of England, but in yet another stroke of bad luck, a terrible storm wrecked the French fleet.

Unwilling to admit defeat, plans for another attempted restoration were soon laid, headed by the charismatic Charles Edward Stuart, ('Bonnie Prince Charlie' or the 'Young Pretender'), son of James Francis Edward Stuart.

"Bonnie Prince Charlie's arrival on Scotland's north-west coast in 1745 – albeit with just one ship and a small force of men – revived the flagging Jacobite cause in Scotland," says Whatley. "He was an attractive figurehead who knew what cards to play to the greatest effect – championing the breaking of the union, and offering assurances about religion. He eventually persuaded Jacobite leaders in Scotland to support another rising, promising that they would be joined by English forces."

Inspired by Charles's confidence, the reinvigorated Jacobite army went head to head with British forces at Prestonpans in East Lothian, where, on 21 September 1745, they achieved their greatest victory. With most of the British Army in France fighting the War of Austrian Succession, Jacobite forces allegedly took fewer than 15 minutes to win the battle. Hundreds of government soldiers were killed or injured. The rest fled or were taken prisoner. It seemed as if the Jacobites' luck was turning.

"ON BOGGY CULLODEN MOOR, THE EXHAUSTED, DISHEARTENED - AND ILL-LED - JACOBITE ARMY WAS DEFEATED IN AROUND AN HOUR"

VISIT

Ruthven Barracks



Ruthven, Kingussie, PH21 1NR

● historic-scotland.gov.uk

Buoyed by their success, the victorious Jacobite army marched south into Manchester and on to Derby. But the promised English boost to the campaign failed to materialise. The would-be king had deceived his followers. With just 200 additional men joining them in England, a decision was made to abandon plans to march on London and the Jacobite army retreated to Falkirk where it fought, and won, another battle against British forces. Yet, instead of proving a bright new dawn, this victory was to be a prelude to disaster.

Says Whatley: "The British government felt it had to crush the Jacobite insurgents once and for all, and the last of the major confrontations took place on 16 April 1746. On boggy Culloden Moor, the exhausted, disheartened – and ill-led – Jacobite army



GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY

JACOBITES: FIVE MORE PLACES TO EXPLORE



The well and courtyard at the now ruined Ruthven Barracks

was defeated by troops under the Duke of Cumberland in under an hour.”

Some 1,500 Jacobites died during the battle, the survivors scattering into the Highlands. A large body gathered at Ruthven (which had fallen to the rebel forces in February 1746) the day afterwards, willing to fight on. But instead of urging his troops onwards, Charles sent instructions for “every man [to] seek his own safety in the best way he can”. With their cause apparently lost, the men set fire to Ruthven and fled. Thus began Charles’s lengthy flight through the heather to avoid being captured.

ALAMY



Headstones at Culloden battlefield bear the names of clan members who died during the bloody clash of 1746

“The aftermath of Culloden was brutal and bloody,” says Whatley. “The British government was determined to make an example not only of the rebels, but also Highland communities they suspected of harbouring Jacobites or providing Jacobite soldiers. The punitive force directed against these communities, and against the Jacobites themselves, has been described by at least one historian as genocide, a charge that is not without foundation.”

But, as Whatley explains, anti-Jacobitism wasn’t purely an English sentiment. “Many Lowland Scots saw the actions of the Highland army as a threat to civil society. They feared the Jacobites would challenge the restored Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The revolution of 1688–89 had established constitutional monarchy in Britain, and made clear the Williamite state’s opposition to Catholic absolutism. At least some of those who bravely put their lives on the line in opposition to the Jacobites, or who resisted them in towns and villages or from kirk pulpits everywhere, did so in the belief that they were defending certain important liberties. These included the right to own property, to be free from arbitrary government intervention, and the right to determine what religion they should adhere to.

“There was a perception that Jacobitism was about the re-establishment of hereditary monarchy, with kings believing they derived their authority from God. Seen in the light of such threats – real and imagined – it is perhaps easier to understand the determination to defeat the Jacobites.

“There is still much debate about why the Jacobites failed,” concludes Whatley. “There is no single reason: often it was just sheer bad luck. Jacobite commanders often disagreed over their aims, while other times they were hamstrung by the loss of strong military leaders such as John Graham, 1st Viscount Dundee (Bonnie Dundee), at the battle of Killiecrankie in July 1689. Over-optimism – even delusion – about their chances of success played its part too.” **H**



Historical advisor: Professor Christopher Whatley, author of *Scottish Society, 1707–1830: Beyond Jacobitism, Towards Industrialisation* (MUP, 2000)
Words: Charlotte Hodgman

1 Edinburgh Castle EDINBURGH Where the Jacobites laid siege

In 1715, Jacobite forces tried unsuccessfully to lay siege to the castle, attempting to break in at night by scaling the north-facing cliffs. A second – also failed – attempt was made during the 1745–46 rising, under Bonnie Prince Charlie. During this attack, the Jacobites captured Holyrood Palace at the far end of the Royal Mile, but failed to take the castle. edinburghcastle.gov.uk

2 Culloden battlefield INVERNESS Where the final battle was lost

The battle of Culloden was a bitter defeat for Jacobite forces. The battlefield, which can still be visited today, features a 20-foot memorial cairn (mound of stones), while headstones on both sides of the road through the battlefield bear the names of dead clan members. You’ll find information on the battle at the visitor centre.

nts.org.uk/Culloden/Home

3 Aughrim battlefield GALWAY Where more than 7,000 died in battle

The battle of Aughrim, in July 1691, was one of the bloodiest battles ever fought on Irish soil and one that effectively put an end to the Jacobites in Ireland. It was fought between the forces of William III and II and James II and VII. Although William emerged victorious, some 7,000 lives were lost in the fight. The Battle of Aughrim Interpretative Centre overlooks the battlefield. discoverireland.com

4 Brixham Port TORBAY Where William of Orange invaded

Dutch prince William of Orange and 14,000 troops landed at Brixham, Torbay on 5 November 1688 where he was welcomed by many in south-west England. After marching to London, William and his wife, Mary, were crowned at Westminster Abbey on 11 April 1689. A statue of William stands at the spot where he allegedly first set foot on English soil. englishriviera.co.uk/brixham

5 Prestonpans battlefield EAST LOTHIAN Where Bonnie Prince Charlie won

Much of the battlefield at Prestonpans – where Bonnie Prince Charlie led Jacobite forces to victory in 1745 – still survives and can be seen from the top of a viewing mound at Meadowmill. battleofprestonpans1745.org



Ruthven was positioned at the junction of roads from Perth, Fort Augustus and Inverness – a huge strategic advantage

CORBIS

“Although now ruined,
the layout of Ruthven is
still virtually as it was
when it was first built”

CHARLOTTE HODGMAN



12

The Scottish Enlightenment

The Enlightenment movement championed reason over tradition – Alexander Broadie explains how **Glasgow University** inspired some of the 18th century's most brilliant thinkers

Glasgow University's main building, a magnificent neo-Gothic edifice on top of a hill overlooking the city, dates from the middle of the 19th century. But parts of the building – in particular sections of its fine gateway, now known as Pearce Lodge, and the Lion and Unicorn stairway, next to the Memorial Chapel – can be traced back to the 17th century; the statues of the lion and unicorn (shown on page 78) that flank the stairway were created in 1690.

Both the stairway and the lodge form a visual link with the university's glorious past. During the Age of Enlightenment in the 18th century, Glasgow's was, in the fullest sense, an Enlightenment university, as indeed it still is to this day.

The Enlightenment movement championed reason over tradition and was characterised by great scientific and intellectual achievements. It was a truly international phenomenon, yet shone nowhere more brightly than in Scotland, and in Scotland nowhere more brightly than in Glasgow University.

For a country to have an Enlightenment, two elements must be in place. The first is a large number of creative people who think for themselves instead of merely assenting to authority. The second is a level of toleration that permits such people to express themselves without risk of retribution.

On these two counts, by the standards of the day, Scotland was one of the most enlightened countries in 18th-century Europe. In many places, but especially in the

cities of Aberdeen, Glasgow and Edinburgh, and particularly in their universities, there were creative thinkers, some of them geniuses, informing or even transforming the various academic disciplines.

In Aberdeen in the early days of the Enlightenment were men such as Colin Maclaurin, a brilliant mathematician who won warm praise from Sir Isaac Newton, and the liberal educational theorist George Turnbull. One of Turnbull's students at the city's Marischal College was Thomas Reid, who would later replace Adam Smith as professor of moral philosophy at Glasgow. He was the most important figure in the Scottish school of common sense philosophy, which was dominant in North America and France during the following century.

Meantime, at Edinburgh University we find the philosopher Dugald Stewart, the sociologist Adam Ferguson and the historian William Robertson. And living in the capital city, but not having university posts, were David Hume, one of the greatest philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment, and James Hutton, whose *Theory of the Earth* has earned him the title 'founder of modern geology'.

At Glasgow University, along with Adam Smith and Thomas Reid, was the philosopher Francis Hutcheson, the physician William Cullen, the chemist Joseph Black and the engineer James Watt.

These formidable thinkers took advantage of the Scottish religious and political authorities' relatively relaxed attitude to new and challenging ideas to set the agenda for cutting-edge research across Europe. Things were very different in France, whose

Professor Alexander Broadie on the balcony of Glasgow's Hunterian Museum. Broadie held the same university position as Scotland's "giant of moral philosophy", Adam Smith

Photography by
Jeremy Sutton-Hibbert

JEREMY SUTTON-HIBBERT



“The Enlightenment
shone nowhere more
brightly than at
Glasgow University”

PROFESSOR ALEXANDER BROADIE



Alexander Broadie pictured on Glasgow University's famous Lion and Unicorn staircase

many enlightened figures had to contend with an absolutist monarchy and church and a powerful system of state censorship. One lumière was Denis Diderot, a writer hostile to Christianity, whose book *Letter on the Blind* landed him in prison in the fortress of Vincennes for three months.

By contrast, though David Hume was widely (if wrongly) believed to be an atheist, he was never threatened with imprisonment. In fact, he was the life and soul of the societies to which he belonged, whose membership included ministers, judges, professors, aristocrats and artists, such as the painters Allan Ramsay and Henry Raeburn, and architects William Adam and his sons John and Robert.

No one illustrates the role of Glasgow in Scotland's Enlightenment better than that giant of moral philosophy, Adam Smith – a c1867 statue of whom stands near Bute Hall in the university's main building. Smith had a long relationship with Glasgow University: as an undergraduate, then a professor – first of logic and rhetoric and later of moral philosophy – and, for two years at the end of his life, as lord rector.

Smith is now widely hailed as the 'father of economics', and it was while lecturing at Glasgow University that he formulated the theories that would lead to his writing *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), a work long recognised as one of the greatest contributions to economic theory ever.

"IT WAS WHILE LECTURING AT GLASGOW THAT ADAM SMITH FORMULATED THE THEORIES THAT WOULD LEAD TO *THE WEALTH OF NATIONS*"

Smith famously argued the case for free trade, contending that trade barriers do not benefit the country that imposes them; on the contrary, he showed that protectionism causes a rise in prices and a lowering of employment prospects. He also argued that schooling should be made universally available and paid for by the government, even sketching out the syllabus that the schools should follow.

The natural sciences are no less a feature of the Scottish Enlightenment than are philosophy and political economy. During a period of 10 years at Glasgow, one of its professors (and a former student of Glasgow), the aforementioned Joseph Black conducted research into heat. In the course of this research, he probed the science behind two major natural phenomena, which he termed latent heat and specific heat. This work makes him one of the founders of the science of thermodynamics.

Among Black's closest collaborators was James Watt, scientific instrument-maker to Glasgow University. Watt produced a brilliant solution to the problem of how to construct an efficient steam engine – and, in doing so, helped transform the productivity of Britain's manufacturing industries.

Some of the scientific instruments used by men such as James Watt, Joseph Lister and Lord Kelvin are held at the university's magnificent Hunterian Museum, founded by Dr William Hunter (1718–83), a



Adam Smith, 'the father of economics'



Specimens from the Enlightenment period are on display at the university's magnificent Hunterian Museum

groundbreaking obstetrician and teacher. The museum, showcasing Hunter's remarkable collections of specimens, manuscripts and other Enlightenment material, opened to the public in 1807 and is hailed as one of the finest university collections in the world. **H**

Alexander Broadie is an honorary professorial research fellow at Glasgow University. His books include *The Scottish Enlightenment* (Birlinn, 2007)

DISCOVER MORE

LISTEN ONLINE

► For more on the Enlightenment listen to **In Our Time**. bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00548ln



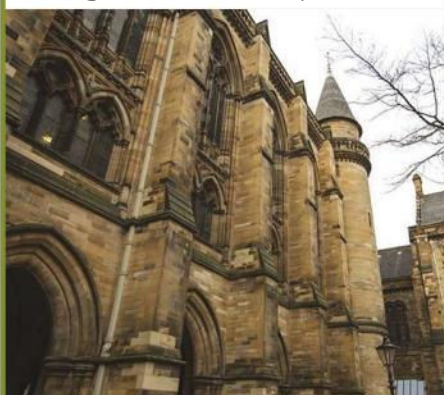
ON THE PODCAST

Alexander Broadie talks the Enlightenment
► historyextra.com/bbchistory
magazine/podcasts

THE SCOTTISH ENLIGHTENMENT: FIVE MORE PLACES TO EXPLORE



Glasgow University



The University of Glasgow
Glasgow G12 8QQ
● gla.ac.uk

1 Arniston House, Gorebridge, Midlothian

● arniston-house.co.uk

In 1726 Robert Dundas, Lord Arniston, commissioned the Enlightenment architect William Adam to build a new country house on the site of the existing tower house. Completed by William's son John, this truly magnificent Palladian building, incorporating two rooms of the original tower house and with amazing baroque plaster-work by Joseph Enzer in the hall, remains largely unchanged. There have been Dundases at Arniston since 1571.



Arniston House is a Palladian gem that has barely changed for 250 years

2 Siccar Point, near Cockburnspath

● scottishgeology.com

Siccar Point, on the North Sea coast, 40 miles east of Edinburgh, is famous for displaying vertical strata of rock jutting up through horizontal strata of less resistant rock. The rocks' remarkable formation helped James Hutton, a genius of the Scottish Enlightenment, formulate the idea of 'deep time' – the concept that the Earth is far, far older than the few thousand years suggested by creationists.



Glasgow University

3 Robert Burns Birthplace Museum, Alloway, Ayr

● burnsmuseum.org.uk

The cottage in which poet Robert Burns (1759–96) was born was built in the 1730s; the south end, consisting of a living room and byre (cowshed), was built by his father, William, in 1757. It is now a fine museum. Nearby are the ruins of the Auld Kirk of Alloway, the scene of the demon revelry in Burns's 1790 poem *Tam o' Shanter*.

4 Edinburgh New Town

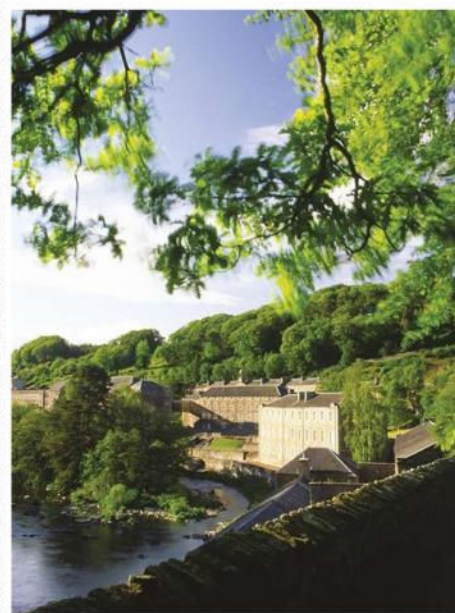
● edinburgh.org

Edinburgh New Town was begun in 1767 to a design by James Craig on land north of Edinburgh's densely populated Old Town. A classic gridiron plan, it consists of three principal east-west streets joining St Andrew's Square in the east and Robert Adams's Charlotte Square to the west. It was later expanded to the east and the north, forming a magnificent area of continuous Georgian layout and architecture. The nomenclature of the streets is Hanoverian and unionist, a reminder that an early design for Edinburgh New Town was in the form of the Union Jack. The Old and New Towns are now officially a World Heritage Site.

5 New Lanark, South Lanarkshire

● newlanark.org

Now a World Heritage Site, this purpose-built mill village was founded by businessman and merchant David Dale in 1785. The welfare and education of the workers, many of them children, was important to Dale. After 1799, his son-in-law Robert Owen introduced better safety rules, a contributory fund for medical care, and an astonishingly enlightened system of education for all. This was a realisation of Adam Smith's doctrine that economic activity should be within a moral framework.



New Lanark offered mill workers a very different way of life to their 19th-century counterparts

CITY BREAKS

Venice, Italy



by Tracy Borman

Lured by some of the finest architecture the world has ever seen, Tracy explores a sumptuous floating city crammed with a plethora of secret treasures

I still remember arriving in Venice for the first time. It was late (I had made the most of the many budget flights on offer), and there was an eerie stillness as I stood, somewhat disorientated, outside the Piazzale Roma – the city's tenuous link to the mainland and the last place you will see any cars. Travelling everywhere either by boat or on foot seemed an alien concept, particularly for one whose sea legs are none too steady, but I made my way to the nearest *vaporetto* stop and caught a water-borne bus that seemed to be heading in vaguely the right direction. It was then the magic began.

As the boat slowly wound its way around the gentle twists and turns of the Grand Canal, the 21st century rapidly faded away and I became utterly captivated by the exquisite, crumbling, sumptuous and serene *palazzi* that cling to the banks of this ancient waterway. It was the beginning of a love affair I knew would last a lifetime.

The history of this beautiful city is as extraordinary – and unlikely – as the maze of palaces, piazzas and canals that define it. Venice began life as a collection of wild, marshy and largely uninhabited islands off the north-east Italian coast. In

the fifth century, after the fall of the western Roman empire, the people of the Veneto (the region surrounding Venice) fled there to escape the Goths, who were blazing a trail of destruction southwards on their way to Rome. Although the settlements they created were intended as temporary, the 'Venetians' gradually made the islands their permanent home. Their system of building was ingenious. To create a solid foundation, wooden stakes were driven into the sandy ground. Wooden platforms were constructed on top and then buildings on top of the platforms. That these have survived hundreds of years is staggering, as is the fact that this 'floating city' dominated western Europe from the 13th–16th centuries.

The key to Venice's success was trade. The riches that flowed



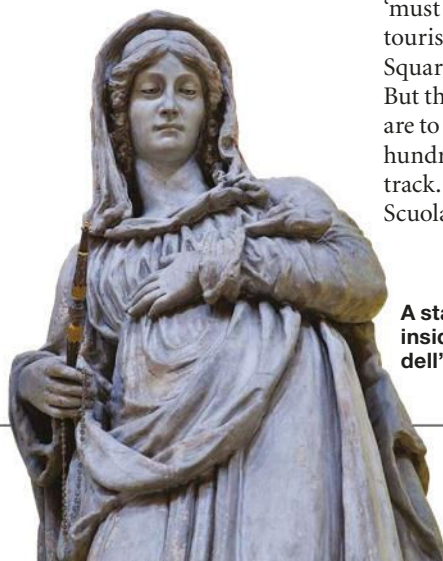
Venice's Grand Canal remains the lifeblood of a city where travel is either by boat or on foot

into the city were turned into the finest, most dazzling architecture the world had ever seen. This can still be enjoyed by visitors today, even though the city is under increasing threat from the rising waters.

There are several well-known 'must sees' on the Venetian tourist trail, such as St Mark's Square and the Rialto Bridge. But the best historical treasures are to be found just a few hundred feet off the well-beaten track. A favourite of mine is the Scuola Grande di San Rocco.

One of several such charitable and religious institutions (*scuole*), it was built in the 16th century and soon afterwards decorated with a remarkable series of paintings by one of the city's most celebrated artists, Tintoretto. "Surely no single picture contains more of human life," observed Henry James upon seeing Tintoretto's *Crucifixion* for the first time. "There is everything in it, including the most exquisite beauty." He could have been describing the whole city.

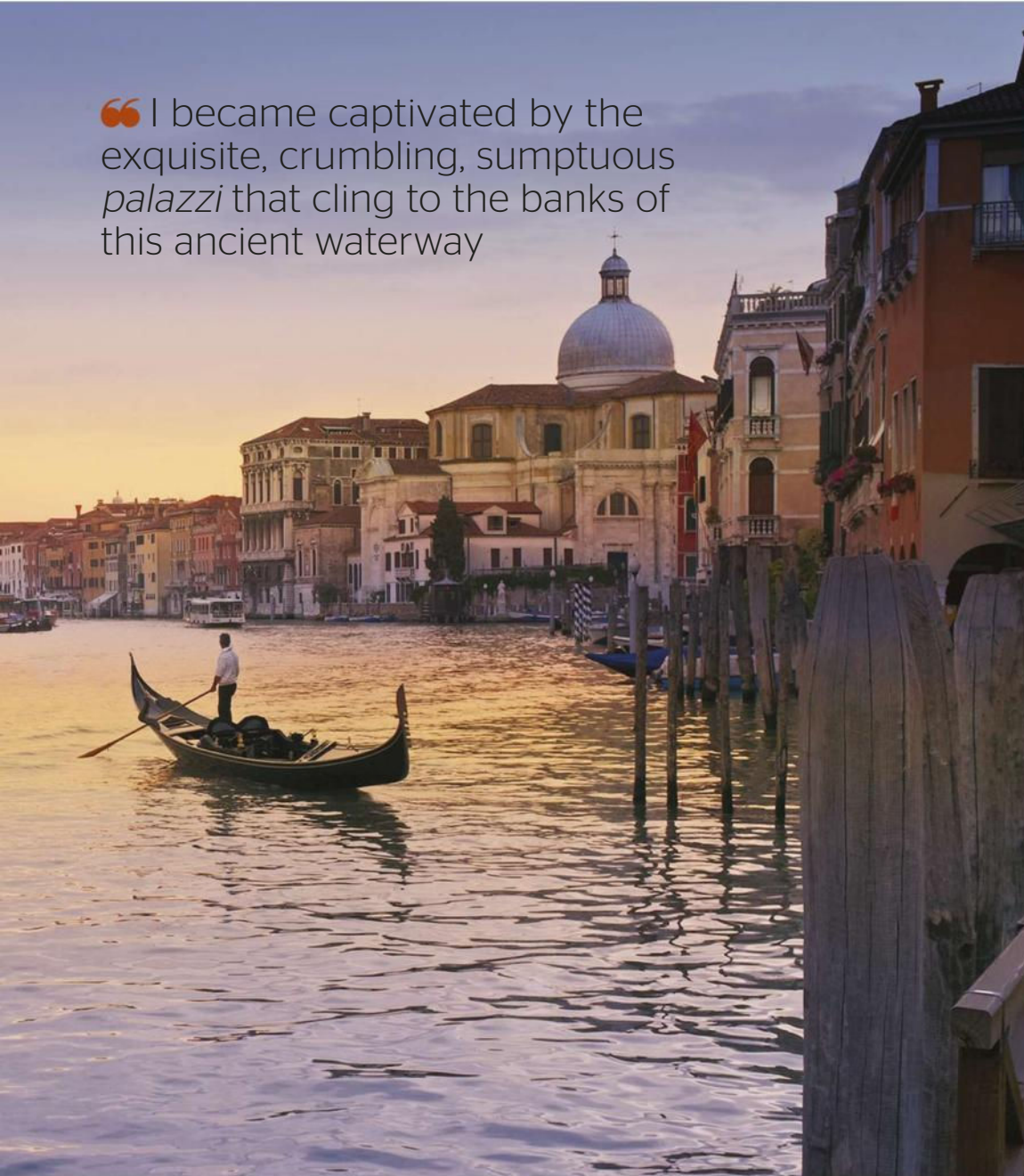
Venice has a plethora of art treasures, and the real joy is seeing them in the buildings for which they were originally painted – not just the *scuole*, but



A statue of the Virgin Mary inside Venice's Madonna dell'Orto church

SHUTTERSTOCK/CORBIS

“I became captivated by the exquisite, crumbling, sumptuous *palazzi* that cling to the banks of this ancient waterway



the hundreds of churches littered across the island. One of the most beautiful is Madonna dell'Orto, in the heart of the Cannaregio district (known as the Ghetto because it once housed the city's Jewish population). That said, there are also some pretty spectacular art galleries, notably the Accademia.

The city has its contemporary art treasures too, thanks to the 20th-century American millionaire Peggy Guggenheim, whose 18th-century *palazzo* on the Grand Canal was given over to her extensive collection of Picassos, Pollocks and the like.

The task of hunting down all the historical treasures Venice has to offer should never be

attempted on an empty stomach. Just like the buildings and works of art, the best eateries are to be found away from the main tourist centres. The delights of a pizza in Campo Santa Margherita, a large and bustling square in the Dorsoduro district, are only to be exceeded by a glass or two of prosecco and some of the exquisite *chiceti* (snacks) available in the city's many cosy bars. And for dessert, head for the Zattere, a beautiful promenade on the south side of the island, which boasts the best selection of *gelateria*, as well as gorgeous views of the neighbouring island of Giudecca.

I have been lucky enough to visit Venice many times since

that first, memorable encounter, and have even lived there for a while. Each visit has offered new historical discoveries, as well as some romantic ones (my husband proposed to me there). It is a city that has changed very little in over 500 years. Tragically, though, its significance to any lover of history is enhanced by the very real prospect that we might be one of the last generations to enjoy it. **H**

Tracy Borman is joint chief curator of Historic Royal Palaces

Read more about Tracy's experiences in Venice at historyextra.com/bbchistorymagazine/venice

ADVICE FOR TRAVELLERS

BEST TIME TO GO

Unless you want to take part in February's world-famous carnival, the best time to visit Venice is either late spring, before the heat of the summer makes the canals somewhat malodorous, or autumn, before the streets disappear under *aqua alta* (high water).

GETTING THERE

Most flights to Venice land at Marco Polo airport – from there a coach, taxi or car can be taken to Piazzale Roma. For a more scenic approach take a *vaporetto* (water taxi) from the airport. Train services operate to the city's Santa Lucia railway station.

WHAT TO TAKE

If you have a large suitcase, then John Julius Norwich's seminal work, *A History of Venice*, will be your best companion. If not, make sure you read it before you go in order to whet your appetite for the historical treasures that await.

WHAT TO BRING BACK

Venetian glass is as famous a commodity today as it was in its trading heyday. Head to Murano for the best selection.

READERS' VIEWS

Poveglia island, in front of the Lido, shows a dark side (from a historical point of view) of Venice.

@xadur



CITY BREAKS

Lisbon, Portugal



By Roger Crowley

Sampling the tastiest of Goan fish curries and unique blues clubs, Roger visits a city that was once the wealthiest and most exotic in Europe

From the ramparts of the medieval castle of St George, perched high above the city, it's possible to understand why Lisbon exists. I've been coming here to research Portugal's voyages of exploration and have grown to love this surprising place, rich in history. With its line of hills and the river Tagus beyond, wide as the straits between continents, gleaming in the sunlight, Lisbon is a gateway to the Atlantic.

The Tagus gifted Lisbon the finest harbour on Europe's western seaboard. From the Phoenicians onwards everyone has stopped off here.

The Arabs held it for four centuries; their original settlement, Alfama, a dense souk of steep lanes through which antique trams hurtle, bells clanging, is where I like to stay. You can get pleasurably lost in its evocative labyrinth, eat a tasty Goan fish curry or visit clubs where *fado* is sung – the languorous urban blues of Portugal, an expression of love, loss and hard times.

The Second Crusade of 1147 expelled the Muslims and built the city's stern cathedral on the slopes below the castle. Many of the English knights got no further and settled down – the start of a long Anglo-Portuguese alliance. But it was Henry the

so-called Navigator, in the 15th century, who really got Lisbon going, with the voyages of discovery that culminated in Vasco da Gama's expedition to India in 1497.

A short tram ride will take you to Belém (Portuguese for Bethlehem) downstream on the Tagus, Gama's point of departure. Belém is an iconic place in Portuguese history. For centuries, ships sailed from here to India, China and Brazil, returning with spices, slaves and gold. Some of this wealth went to build the city's great treasure, the 16th-century monastery of Jerónimos, a World Heritage site, 300 yards long, wreathed inside and out with exuberant carved symbols, like the ornamentation on a Hindu temple. Its church contains the tombs of Gama, Manuel I, the king who ordered his expedition, and Luís de Camões, Portugal's greatest poet.

Nearby is the romantic tower of Belém, standing offshore in the Tagus, similarly embellished with motifs and carved figures, including the head of the first rhino to be seen in Europe since the time of the

Romans. (Manuel sent the live rhino to the pope but sadly it drowned en route.)

The Portuguese come to Belém to revere their past, take the lift to the top of the modern Monument to the Discoveries (another wonderful view) and to eat a local speciality, *pastéis de Belém*, custard tarts sprinkled with cinnamon and washed down with hits of black coffee.

Spices made Lisbon for a time the wealthiest and most exotic city in Europe. It was the silicon valley of exploration and attracted map makers, merchants and entrepreneurs from across the continent, but its urban fabric was dramatically ruptured by the great earthquake of 1755. It happened on All Saints' Day. Many people were in church and thousands died. The aftershock was not just physical – in the age of enlightenment it caused debate across

Europe about the existence of God. Much of the low-lying city was wiped out in a single day. The grand centre, fronting the

Philippa of Lancaster married John I, king of Portugal, in 1387. Their many offspring became known as Portugal's 'Illustrious Generation'

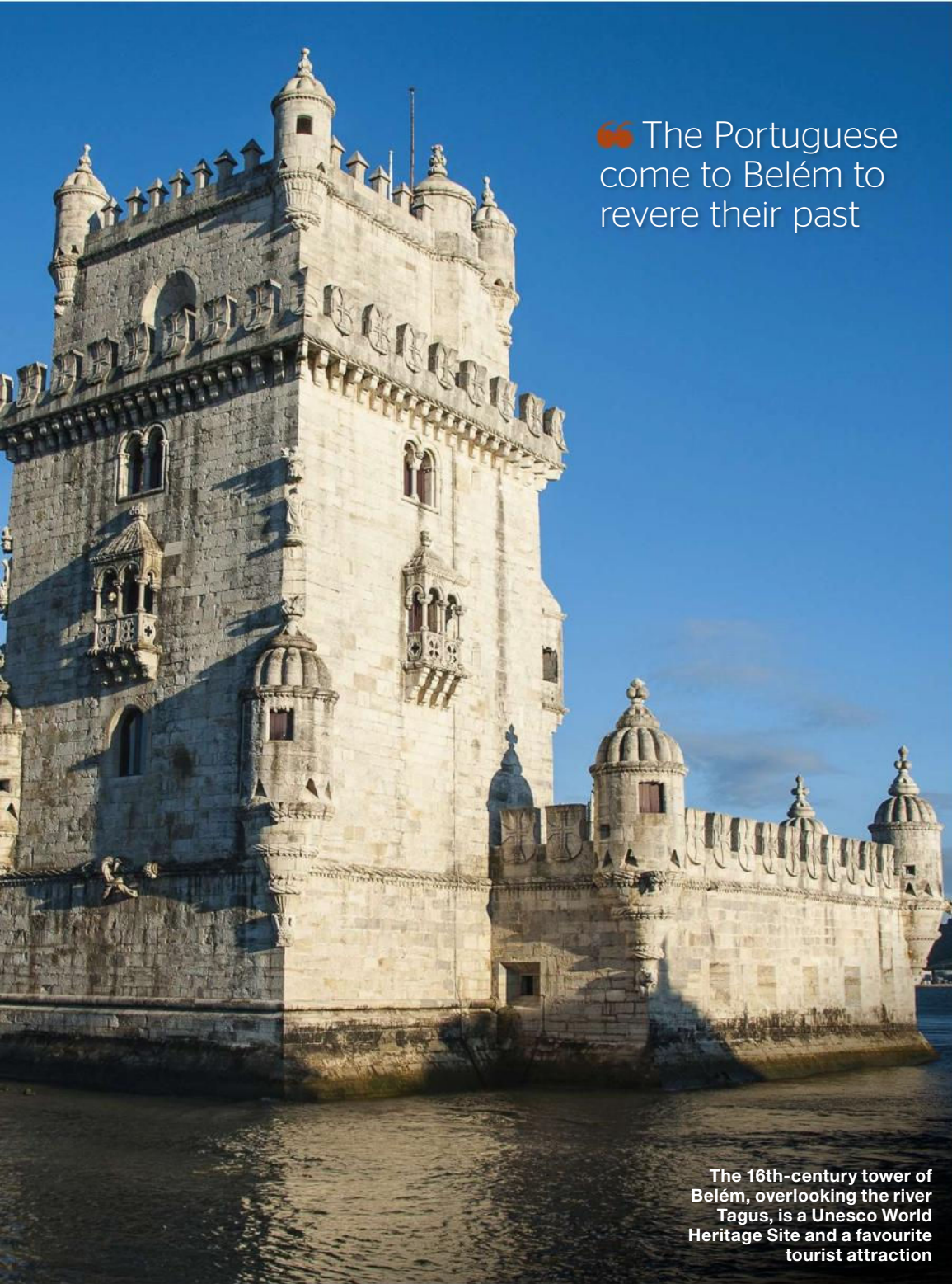


Tagus, was rebuilt in imperial style, like London after the Great Fire of 1666, but the stark skeleton of the Carmo Convent remains as a monument to the devastation.

Much of this history can be glimpsed in a series of museums: the Museum of Ancient Arts, which contains treasures from the Orient; the Maritime Museum; the Gulbenkian; and, one of my favourites, the Tile



ROBERT HARDING



“The Portuguese come to Belém to revere their past

The 16th-century tower of Belém, overlooking the river Tagus, is a Unesco World Heritage Site and a favourite tourist attraction

Museum. *Azulejos*, glazed tiles, are a national art form – you can see examples everywhere throughout Lisbon, but this collection is splendid.

If museums pall and it gets a little too hot for you, take a short train ride to the nearby town of Sintra, Lisbon’s green hill station. Perched on an outcrop, it’s noticeably cooler in summer and contains the fascinating National Palace of

Sintra – a wonderful mix of Moorish and medieval European architecture, closely connected with another figure of the Portuguese golden age. Philippa of Lancaster, daughter of John of Gaunt, came to Lisbon to marry King John I in 1387; she was a guiding influence on the Portuguese court and produced a succession of talented sons, including Henry the Navigator, who steered

Lisbon and Portugal on its remarkable voyage. **H**

Roger Crowley is a writer and historian. His book, *Conquerors: How Portugal Seized the Indian Ocean and Forged the First Global Empire*, was published in September 2015 (Faber & Faber)

Read more about Roger’s experiences at historyextra.com/bbchistorymagazine/lisbon

ADVICE FOR TRAVELLERS

BEST TIME TO GO

A visit to Lisbon in mid-late spring means you avoid the heat of the Portuguese summer or the often unpredictable winter weather. Carnival season takes place in June, when Lisbon’s patron saints, Peter, John and Anthony, are widely celebrated.

GETTING THERE

You can fly to Lisbon from most UK airports, including London, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Birmingham, Bristol and Manchester.

WHAT TO PACK

Both an umbrella and sun cream if you’re going in spring. The weather can switch from Atlantic rain to summer heat very suddenly.

WHAT TO BRING BACK

Your house name or number in *azulejos* – a form of glazed ceramic tilework.

READERS’ VIEWS

Go up into the hills & see beautiful town of Sintra – where Arthur Wellesley once signed a truce that almost ended his career
@_GerryRoberts

Take a tour with the old tram. So romantic and wonderful views of the town
@EuropeRider

See the amazing ceramic tiles everywhere. Don’t forget a trip up the tower!
Roger Perris



CITY BREAKS

Berlin, Germany



by Frank McDonough

From the Brandenburg Gate to the Holocaust Memorial, Frank McDonough explores the dark past of a vibrant European city

Since reading William L Shirer's *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* as a teenager I've been hooked on that dark period. My academic life has been fixated on its history, and research for several of my books has led me to Berlin on numerous occasions; I'm now passionate about the city.

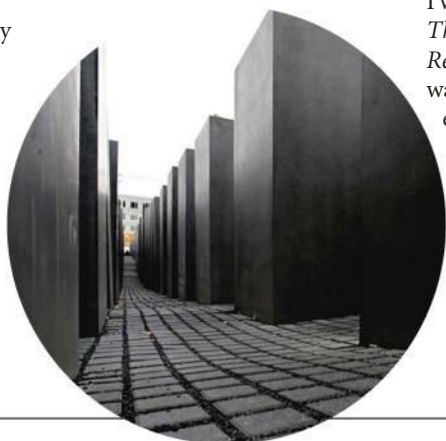
Because of the division of Berlin during the Cold War, the city has a strange layout, with no real centre, and you can find something new each time you go.

A good starting point is the Brandenburg Gate. The famous monument suffered heavy bomb damage during the war but has been impressively restored. Nearby, important historical landmarks include the Reichstag. On 27 February 1933 it was set on fire by Marinus van der Lubbe, a Dutch communist (who may or may not have been acting alone). Now called the Bundestag, it's the seat of the German parliament, and security is incredibly tight: you must register online before you visit. I was impressed by the viewing

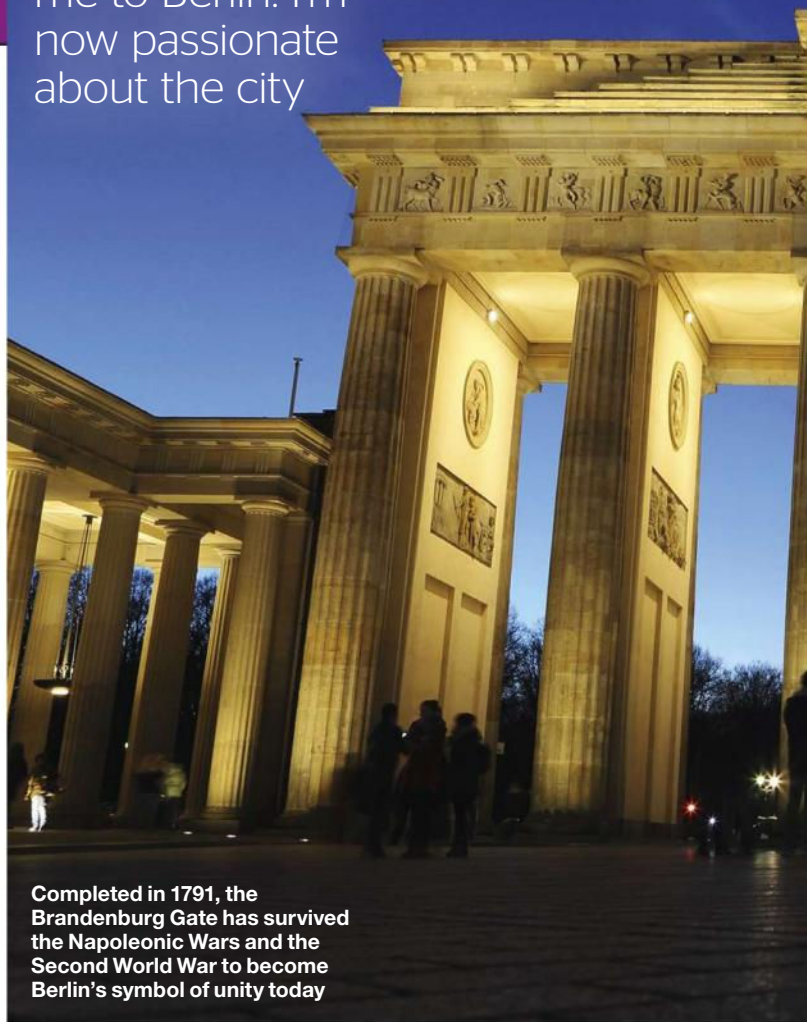
gallery, which offers terrific views of the city.

Nearby is the Holocaust Memorial, composed of 2,711 large concrete slabs arranged in rows. It looks like a maze, but also resembles a cemetery. I was particularly moved by the underground exhibition centre, which outlines the story of the 'Final Solution' to the Jewish Question' within an imaginative series of displays. In the Room of Dimensions, the memoirs of Holocaust victims light up beneath your feet as you walk across. They are heartbreaking.

Two minutes' walk away, on Gertrud-Kolmar-Strasse, is the site of Hitler's underground bunker. Badly damaged after the war, it was not even marked until



“Research for several of my books has led me to Berlin. I'm now passionate about the city



Completed in 1791, the Brandenburg Gate has survived the Napoleonic Wars and the Second World War to become Berlin's symbol of unity today

2006, and today there's just a small information board near a car park. It's strange that the authorities haven't built a museum here to chronicle how easily a democracy can become a dictatorship, to remember a regime that was born in the Reichstag and died in the bunker.

Of particular interest when I was researching my latest book *The Gestapo: The Myth and Reality of Hitler's Secret Police* was the Topography of Terror exhibition on Niederkirchnerstrasse. Once the site of Gestapo HQ, it was bombed at the end of the war. The

The Holocaust Memorial in central Berlin comprises 2,711 concrete slabs and was inaugurated in 2005

horrific activities of the Gestapo and SS are brought out clearly here in an imaginative way.

I have also visited the German Resistance Memorial Centre on Stauffenbergstrasse many times. Concentrating on resistance groups and brave individuals who opposed Hitler's regime, the centre is housed in the Bendlerblock, where Claus von Stauffenberg and co-conspirators planned the 'Operation Valkyrie' bomb attack on Hitler on 20 July 1944. A plaque marks the spot where they were executed. Two things particularly affected me when I first visited. First was the statue of a naked figure by Jacob Epstein, clearly designed to evoke the helplessness of resistance, and second a huge room with a display about the

ALAMY/REX-SHUTTERSTOCK



ADVICE FOR TRAVELLERS

BEST TIME TO GO

Late spring and early autumn are ideal times to visit.

GETTING THERE

Flights from most UK cities serve Berlin's Tegel and Schönefeld airports.

WHERE TO STAY

I suggest staying on or near the Kurfürstendamm, the famous Berlin avenue lined with shops, restaurants and bars. I've stayed most often at Hotel Zoo, which is on Kurfürstendamm itself, or Hotel Bogota on Schlüterstrasse, a quiet side street.

WHAT TO PACK

Buy a Berlin Welcome Card online in advance for discounts on museums and tours, plus unlimited travel on buses and trains. Buses 100 and 200 follow a circuit around the main attractions.

WHAT TO BRING BACK

If you've time for shopping, you'll find everything from high-street wares to designer brands on Kurfürstendamm.

READERS' VIEWS

For a real sense of history, walk the route of the Wall from Checkpoint Charlie to the Holocaust Memorial
@cazp53

Book in advance for a tour inside the Bundestag – an awesome experience of the modern building shoe-horned into the old one
Colin Cuthbert



numerous people involved in the plot – it's amazing it was not uncovered before the attack.

The Jewish Museum on Lindenstrasse is fascinating – not least the building by Daniel Libeskind, which resembles an alien spaceship. It explores German-Jewish history over the centuries, and features two especially chilling exhibits: the Memory Void – 10,000 hollowed steel faces dedicated to victims of the Holocaust – and the Holocaust Void, an empty, dark room illuminated by just a small shaft of light from the top. To me, the museum conveys a message of hope and survival, not despair.

When researching my book on the Holocaust I visited Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp, 22 miles north of Berlin, in which

political and religious opponents were interned. Thousands died here from starvation, medical experiments and executions. It's in a bleak spot resembling a large field surrounded by deserted guard towers, but the memorial, next to the crematoria, brings home the purpose of this site. It moved me to tears.

The House of the Wannensee Conference, in a beautiful spot overlooking a lake south-west of the city centre, is moving for a different reason. It concentrates on events leading to a meeting on 20 January 1942, chaired by leading SS figure Reinhard Heydrich, at which details of the 'Final Solution' were agreed. It seemed amazing to me when I first visited how divorced from the grim reality of the death

camps were the people who took the decision to kill the Jews. It's hard to escape the contrast between the room in which the Holocaust was planned and the rooms of chilling photographs of its victims.

Berlin is a wonderful city that people enjoy for many different reasons, but my Berlin will always be linked to the city's Nazi past, and its important and moving sites of remembrance. **H**

Frank McDonough is professor of international history at Liverpool John Moores University

Read more about Frank's experiences in Berlin at historyextra.com/bbchistorymagazine/berlin

13

King Arthur's legend

Miles Russell and Spencer Mizen visit **Tintagel Castle in Cornwall** to explore its links with one of the world's great mythological figures

King Arthur. Heroic British warlord who led the fight against marauding Anglo-Saxons, or a figment of a writer's fertile imagination? It's a question that's been puzzling poets, chroniclers, historians and film-makers for more than 1,000 years.

And nowhere does this question have more resonance than on a small, wind-swept, rain-battered headland projecting into the sea off north Cornwall: Tintagel.

Numerous sites across north-west Europe – from Glastonbury Abbey in Somerset to the Forest of Paimpont in Brittany – have trumpeted their connections to King Arthur. Yet surely none are as intimately linked to the legendary warlord as Tintagel.

That this is the case is almost exclusively down to the endeavours of one man: a Welsh cleric going by the name of Geoffrey of Monmouth. In the 1130s, Geoffrey set about writing a history of the kings who had ruled the Britons over the preceding 2,000 years. The resulting *Historia Regum Britanniae* is among the greatest pieces of medieval history writing – though not an entirely reliable one. It tells us, for example, that Britain was founded by the Trojans, and introduces us to King Lear. Yet, most significant of all, says Miles Russell, senior lecturer in prehistoric and Roman archaeology at Bournemouth University, is what it tells us about Arthur.

"In his *Historia Regum Britanniae* Geoffrey gathered together a series of legends from western Britain to come

up with a single narrative of the past," says Miles. "So, in the case of Arthur, he related a tale that had been passed down by word of mouth through the generations.

"In this story, Uther Pendragon is besotted with Igraine, beautiful wife of Gorlois, Duke of Cornwall. Uther is determined to have Igraine for himself and so, with the help of the wizard Merlin, assumes the image of Gorlois and tricks his way into Gorlois' castle at Tintagel. And it is here, Geoffrey tells us, that Arthur is conceived."

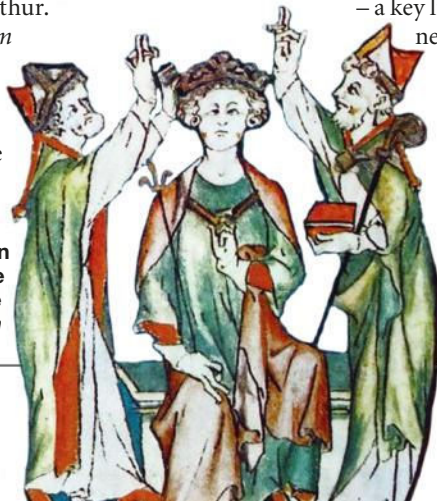
It's not hard to divine why Geoffrey chose Tintagel as the site of a key, dramatic scene in his retelling of a shadowy, mythical past. The modern world can seem a long way away when you venture out onto the island fortress on a dark winter's day – the wind whipping around you and the sea raging below. Yet there's more to Tintagel's links to Dark Age Britain than atmosphere.

"Geoffrey's decision to choose Tintagel as the site of Arthur's conception would have been informed by history every bit as much as legend," says Miles. "We know that there was a lot of mining activity – primarily for tin – around here in the Iron Age. And, as Tintagel is such a dominant part of the local landscape, it's more than possible that there was an Iron Age fort up here – perhaps ruled by an Arthur-like warlord."

What's beyond dispute is that, by the sixth century, Tintagel was a bustling port – a key link in a thriving trade network that stretched from southern Britain down the Atlantic seaboard to the Mediterranean coastline.

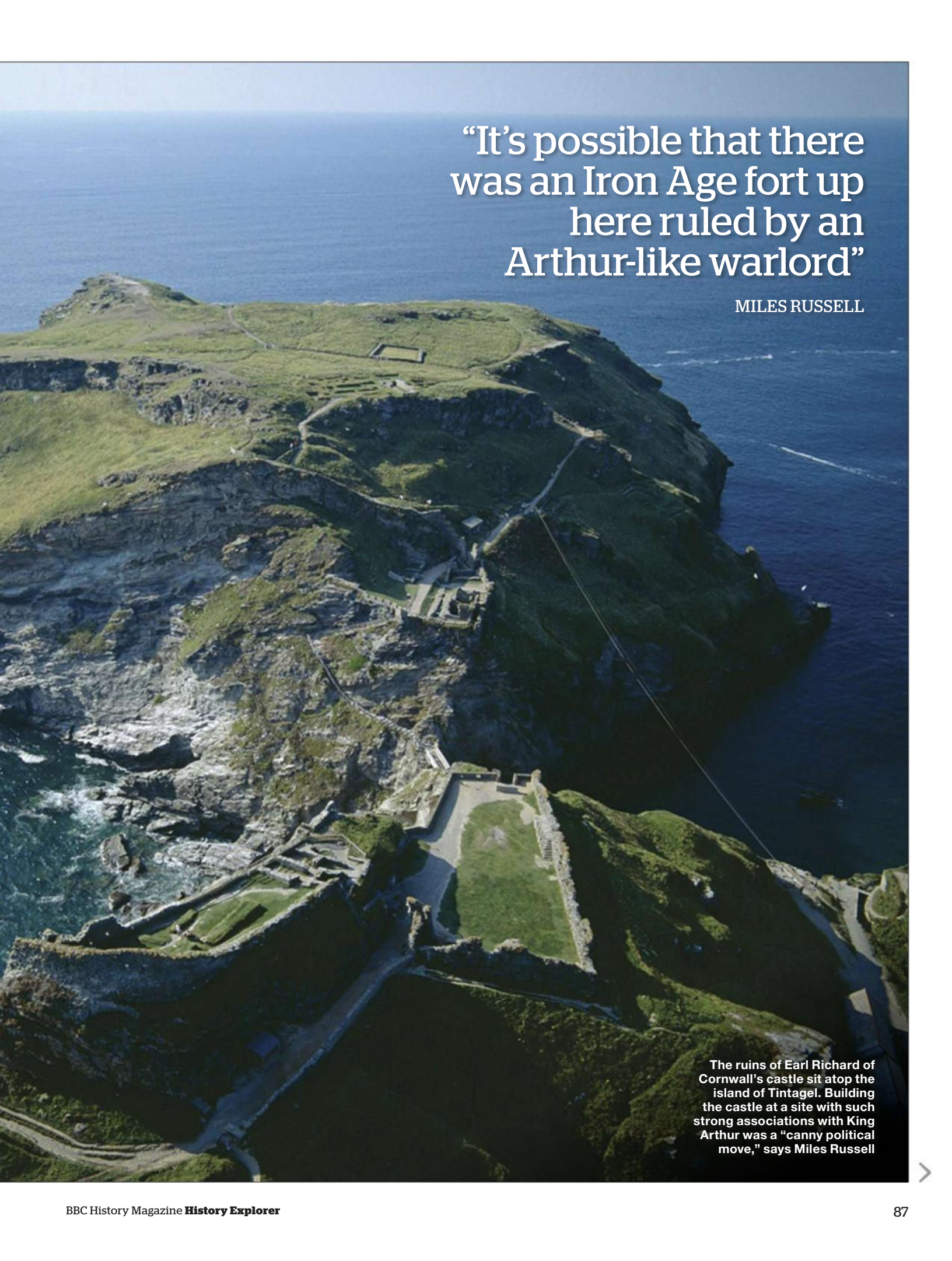
"You would have had ships coming in here from all over southern Europe to buy tin and

Arthur is crowned king in an image from the 13th-century chronicle *Flores Historiarum*



ALAMY/ENGLISH HERITAGE



An aerial photograph of the ruins of Tintagel Castle, a medieval fortress built on a steep, rocky cliff overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. The castle's stone walls and foundations are visible, along with a large, rectangular, grassy area that was once a courtyard. The surrounding landscape is rugged and green, with the sea visible in the background.

“It’s possible that there
was an Iron Age fort up
here ruled by an
Arthur-like warlord”

MILES RUSSELL

The ruins of Earl Richard of Cornwall’s castle sit atop the island of Tintagel. Building the castle at a site with such strong associations with King Arthur was a “canny political move,” says Miles Russell



The wooden bridge that conveys 200,000 visitors a year to the island on which, legend has it, King Arthur was conceived

copper,” says Miles, “and, in return, they brought with them exotic goods such as wine and olive oil.” That this is the case is attested by the hundreds of pieces of fifth to seventh-century pottery that have been discovered all over the island. Faint remains of what is thought to have been the residence of a Dark Age ruler also suggest that Tintagel was a site of some importance.

Yet, following its brief heyday, Tintagel slipped back into obscurity – a draughty outpost on the edge of the kingdom. And there it probably would have stayed if it hadn’t been for the arrival on the headland of Earl Richard of Cornwall – brother of King Henry III – in the early 13th century.

The great building project that Richard initiated here in the 1230s still dominates Tintagel today. At its centrepiece is his castle and, though it’s now nothing more than a ruin, much of Richard’s handiwork – including two courtyards, a curtain wall and a gate tower – continue to defy everything that the Cornish weather can throw at them.

But the question is, why did Richard choose to build at Tintagel? “Like many Norman aristocrats, Richard was entranced by the romance of the Arthur legend,” says Miles. “So when he decided to set up residence in northern Cornwall, what better way of establishing a bond with a

heroic, Dark Age warlord – and, in doing so, effectively controlling the Cornish people – than by choosing the site where Arthur was conceived? For Richard, building a castle at Tintagel was a canny political move.”

Richard’s desperation to establish himself as a latter-day Arthur is even reflected in the design of the castle itself. “Its walls are thin, and it’s built out of slate in a mock antiquated style,” says Miles. “This tells us that Richard wasn’t attempting to build a highly defensible stronghold but a romantic building that harks back to Arthur – part of what you could call a medieval theme park.”

If Richard was obsessed with King Arthur, he was far from alone. Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia Regum Britanniae* was hugely popular in the Middle Ages – and Arthur was its most feted hero.

“The Normans loved Arthur, and that’s partly because he is said to have defeated the Anglo-Saxons, just like they’d done,” says Miles. “By identifying with Arthur, the Normans were saying: ‘We’ve got a kinship with an ancient line of British kings, so don’t dare question our legitimacy.’ You can see this in Henry II’s decision to commission Glastonbury’s monks to excavate the supposed graves of Arthur and Guinevere.”

Polite society

Yet the real genius of Geoffrey of Monmouth’s text is that it transformed a blood-soaked warlord, battling through the mud of western Britain into a universal hero, celebrated in polite society across Europe. Within decades, Arthur was being championed as a Christian hero during the crusades and celebrated as an icon of knightly chivalry by French writers.

And this, says Miles, was a phenomenon with staying power. “More than 300 years after Geoffrey died, Henry VII named his eldest son Arthur to bolster his hold on the English throne. Henry VIII even used the Arthur legend – and its link to a form of British Christianity that predates the papacy – to justify his break with Rome.”

But beneath the chivalry, the romance,

VISIT

Tintagel Castle



Castle Road, Tintagel, Cornwall PL34 0HE
english-heritage.org.uk

and the political agendas, there remain questions: Where did the idea of King Arthur come from? Could the legend be based on a historical figure?

“The trouble with this is that it takes us back to one of the most shadowy eras in British history – the chaotic, confused period that would have followed the departure of the Romans,” says Miles Russell. “Sure, there could have been a king going by the name of Arthur – this was, after all, a time of warlords, of kingdom fighting kingdom, of the Anglo-Saxon invasion. Yet the reality is that, such is the dearth of evidence, we can never know.

“There is, for example, no earliest primary source that we can say contains the first secure reference to Arthur. A poem

ALAMY/ENGLISH HERITAGE

“THE GENIUS OF GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH’S TALE IS THAT IT TRANSFORMED AN OBSCURE BRITISH WARLORD INTO A EUROPEAN HERO”



KING ARTHUR: FIVE MORE PLACES TO EXPLORE



The seal of Richard, Earl of Cornwall, who turned Tintagel into a “medieval theme park” dedicated to Dark Age romances

called *The Gododdin*, possibly from AD 600, compares one of its lead characters to Arthur, which suggests that he may have existed as a model of heroism by the start of the seventh century.

“But the fact is, Geoffrey of Monmouth’s Arthur is a composite character. He’s created from multiple different heroes. There could be elements of Magnus Maximus – the Roman commander of Britain who led a massive rebellion against the emperor Gratian. Then there’s a British general called Ambrosius Aurelianus. He is a prominent figure in the writings of a sixth-century British monk called Gildas,

who described how Aurelianus defeated the English at a great (and seemingly historical) battle at a place called Badon.”

Could this English-slaying freedom fighter have been the primary inspiration for the mythical figure that became King Arthur? Again, we may never know. But the fact that men such as Aurelianus lived in the period following Rome’s fall – an age when Tintagel was a thriving port and probably a power base – only serves to strengthen the site’s association with Arthur.

And it is an association that has drawn visitors to Tintagel for centuries. After Earl Richard’s death, the island-fortress went into a long decline and the castle became a romantic ruin. That’s how it stayed until the 18th and 19th centuries when a series of artists such as Alfred Tennyson – fired up by a renaissance in interest in ancient Britain – began championing Tintagel’s connections to the Arthurian legend through paintings and literature. By the end of the 19th century, tourists were flocking here to witness ‘Arthur’s castle’ and ‘Merlin’s cave’.

Celebrated creation

While most modern historians agree that it is simply impossible to establish a historical link between Tintagel and Geoffrey of Monmouth’s most celebrated creation, those tourists keep coming. Tintagel is now one of English Heritage’s top five attractions, drawing up to 3,000 visitors a day in the peak summer season.

With a new outdoor interpretation of Arthur’s legend (featuring interactive exhibits and artworks) set to be unveiled in 2016, and plans in place to build a new, 72-metre-long footbridge to link the mainland with the island in 2019, the future is looking bright for this Dark Age site.

And that, says Miles Russell, is also the case for Arthur. “He’s moved beyond his status as an obscure British king to one of the world’s great mythological figures, and so there will always be another element of his legend that can be drawn out. I don’t think his story will ever end.” **H**



Historical advisor:

Dr Miles Russell (left), senior lecturer in prehistoric and Roman archaeology at Bournemouth University.
Words: Spencer Mizen

1 Cadbury Castle SOMERSET Where an ancient fort was upgraded

This Iron Age fortress was first linked with Arthur in 1542, when the antiquary John Leland claimed that Cadbury had been ‘Camelot’. Excavations here in the late 1960s demonstrated that there was indeed significant remodification of the prehistoric fort in the post Roman period, but whether this was the headquarters of a monarch who inspired the myth of Arthur is unknown. visitsomerset.co.uk

2 Glastonbury Abbey SOMERSET Where ‘Arthur’ was reburied

Glastonbury today has strong popular associations with King Arthur. This is in part due to the romantic setting of both the ruined abbey and the Tor, but also because it was here, in 1191, that monks disturbed two graves, supposedly those of Arthur and Guinevere, establishing Glastonbury as ‘Avalon’. The bones were reburied by the high altar, providing a lucrative pilgrimage attraction. glastonburyabbey.com

3 The Great Hall WINCHESTER Where a round table hangs

On the wall of the Great Hall of Winchester hangs a large round table. (The round table was added to Arthur’s story in the 12th century, and has become a potent aspect of the myth.) Dendrochronology suggests that it dates from the late 13th century and it may have been commissioned by Edward I, who was a great Arthur enthusiast. hants.gov.uk/greathall

4 Caerleon GWENT Where Arthur may have won a battle

Geoffrey of Monmouth, who may have grown up nearby, frequently mentions Caerleon’s Roman legionary fortress in the *Historia Regum Britanniae*, describing it as a powerful city in Arthur’s time. Caerleon could also be the ‘City of the Legions’, one of the many victories in battle credited to Arthur. cadw.gov.wales/daysout

5 Birdoswald CUMBRIA Where it’s claimed Arthur was slain

Birdoswald was the Roman fort of Banna, an outpost at the western end of Hadrian’s Wall. Some have suggested that the fort provided the basis for the battle of Camlann, where Arthur fell in battle fighting the treacherous Mordred but, as with all things Arthurian, this is much disputed. english-heritage.org.uk

Part of a new exhibition dedicated to Tintagel and the legend of King Arthur, which opened in the summer of 2015



“By the end of the 19th century, tourists were flocking to see ‘Arthur’s castle’ and ‘Merlin’s cave’”

MILES RUSSELL



ALAMY

Tintagel Castle stands in a dramatic location on an island promontory. The rocky inlet below is known as Merlin's cave



14

The Pendle witches

Dr Robert Poole and Charlotte Hodgman visit **Lancaster Castle** in Lancashire, where one of the most famous, and sensational, witch trials in British history took place, in 1612

“*ne voice for 10 dragged this way once by superstition, ignorance. Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.*”

So begins the first verse of Carol Ann Duffy's 2012 tribute to the so-called Pendle witches – the eight women and two men who were sent to the gallows following one of the most sensational witch trials in British history.

Lancaster Castle, where the alleged witches were tried at the August assizes of 1612, must have been a formidable sight to the men and women who had travelled to Lancaster on foot from the remote village of Pendle, some 50 miles away.

Dating back to the Roman period, the castle has held prisoners for much of its long history – serving as a female penitentiary and debtors' prison in the 19th century, as well as incarcerating religious and political prisoners, such as Quaker founder George Fox, and Catholic recusants of the 17th century. Until 2011, the castle also housed modern-day prisoners, as HMP Lancaster, and is still a working crown court today.

From its hilltop location, the 15th-century gatehouse towers above all who walk into its dark interior. Its thick, stone walls, impressive battlements and portcullis would have offered little comfort to the weary group of men and women who arrived for trial just over 400 years ago. (Visitors to Pendle can take the 'Walking With Witches Trail', which follows their route across the Ribble Valley, to Lancaster Castle.)



The devil appearing in the form of a black dog was a common theme of the trial

“The trial of the so-called Lancashire witches was England's biggest peacetime witch trial,” says Dr Robert Poole, guild research fellow at the University of Central Lancashire, and an expert on the case. “But for me, one of the most remarkable things about the Pendle witch trial is that it sprang from such small beginnings.”

Numb and dumb

The story starts with a young woman named Alison Device, who, in the spring of 1612, was out walking near Nelson, in the borough of Pendle, when she met a pedlar who refused to sell her some pins. What happened next is somewhat confused, but the pedlar appears to have become very frightened and fell down from what we would now recognise as a stroke – numb down one side and unable to speak.

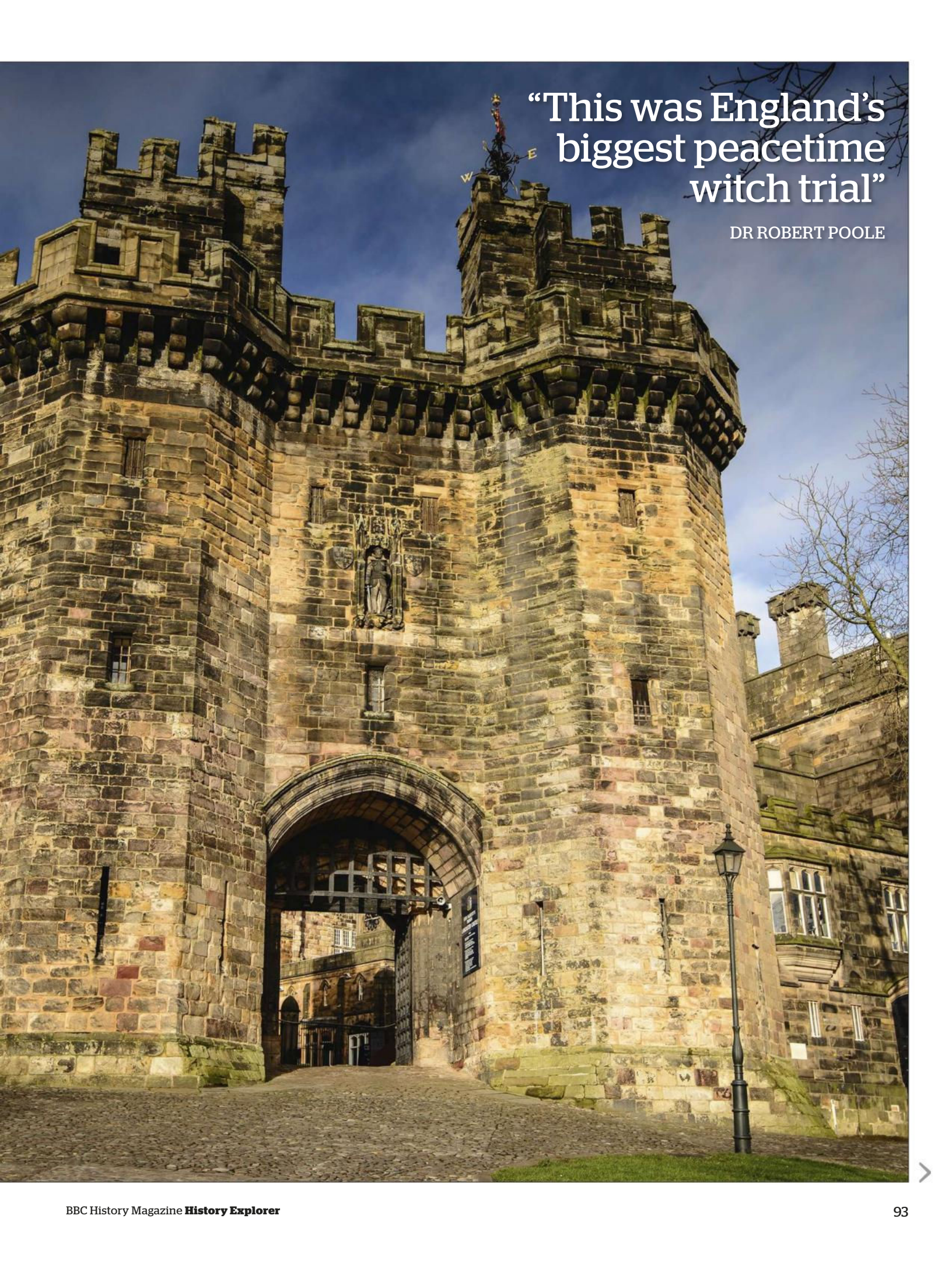
The terrified pedlar was taken to a nearby pub and his son was sent for. On his arrival, he found his father a little recovered, but ranting about a black dog who had come to him while he lay paralysed. Convinced that the pedlar's condition was due to witchcraft, the two men sent for Alison herself, clearly hoping that she could undo the harm she had caused. On her arrival, she apologised to the pedlar, admitted to bewitching him but claimed she was unable to reverse the magic, stating that her grandmother was a witch and that bad things happened around her. Local magistrate Roger Nowell was sent for, and an investigation into witchcraft began.

“When Nowell started delving further, events spiralled,” says Poole. “A Puritan magistrate, Nowell had his own political and



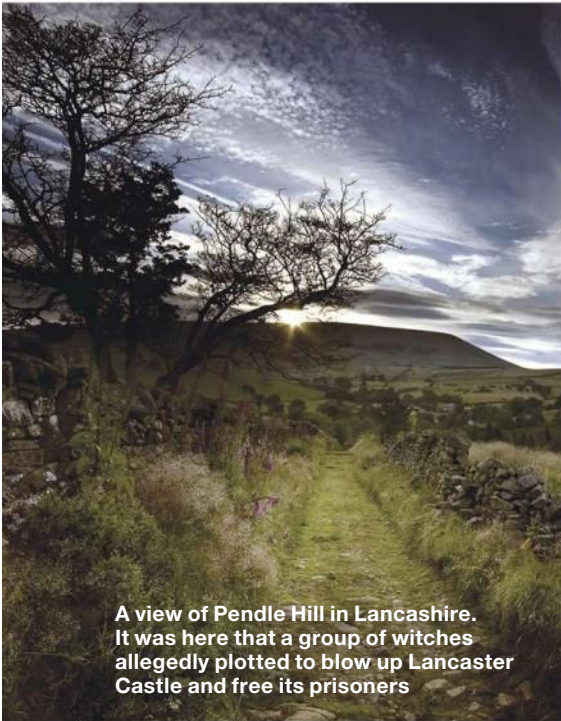
The formidable gatehouse of Lancaster Castle would have greeted the Pendle witches when they arrived in 1612. The group, who had travelled some 50 miles on foot, were then thrown into a dark, damp cell and left for months

BECCA THORNE/KEN FAWCETT



"This was England's biggest peacetime witch trial"

DR ROBERT POOLE



A view of Pendle Hill in Lancashire. It was here that a group of witches allegedly plotted to blow up Lancaster Castle and free its prisoners

religious reasons for wanting to hunt down witches, along with religious dissenters and papists. He interviewed Alison's mother, Elizabeth, and grandmother, Old Demdike, before casting his net wider and involving neighbours in his investigations, too. The whole trial snowballed from there.

"One thing the investigations threw up was that witchcraft accusations in the community went back 20 years. It seems Old Demdike and her 'rival', Old Chattox, had been used by their neighbours for years to perform magic as a means of curing sick cattle, and even to resolve family feuds. The women were clearly utilised by their neighbours – all of whom seem to have believed in magic – but it was only when Nowell started investigating for his own reasons that we see accusations of witchcraft and trials.

"The floodgates of accusations opened and neighbour started to incriminate neighbour (although the families themselves stayed loyal to each other initially) and before long over a dozen alleged witches from the Pendle area were arrested and sent to Lancaster Castle."

On their arrival, the alleged witches were held in a cell deep below the well tower. The building – also known as the Witches' tower – still stands, and visitors can peer through the iron-barred door, down the dark, stone stairs that lead to the cell below. The small,

bare room, with damp walls and metal rings in the floor, has hardly any natural light and is virtually unchanged in 400 years. The accused were held there for several months while they awaited trial. One of the prisoners, Old Demdike, died – most likely in the cell – before being called to the stand.

Although not currently accessible to the public, just a peek down into the darkness is enough for most visitors to imagine the appalling conditions these men and women were confined in. Largely ignored by their gaolers, living in filth and squalor with little comprehension of what was happening to them, it is little wonder that many began to 'see' the black dogs, devils and spirits they later confessed to having encountered.

Witches on trial

"The Lancashire trial was essentially a show trial," comments Poole. "A call for other witches to be tried had been sent out across the county over the summer – perhaps to demonstrate the true extent of the menace of witchcraft in Lancashire – and a total of 19 witches appeared before the judges at the August assizes.

"But the trial itself – like others of the day – was far from fair and none of those on trial had counsel to defend themselves. All of the accused had given written testimonies which were read out in court as their evidence. These men and women had to sit and listen to their words being selectively quoted against them."

The trial began on 18 August, beginning with Old Chattox, accused of the murder of Robert Nutter some 18 years previously. The trial accounts, written by clerk of the court Thomas Potts, tell of the devil visiting in the form of a black dog; of flying ponies and of curses that could not be undone. It remains the best-documented account of an English witch trial, despite the evident bias of its author, who was writing for an audience willing to believe in such evil.

"What we see with the events in Lancaster is a witch hunt rather than a genuine trial," says Poole. "Today, the castle is a symbol of royal authority, with the arms

of John of Gaunt, 1st Duke of Lancaster displayed on its walls. But Lancashire in the early 17th century was regarded as one of the dark corners of the land. It had never been properly evangelised by the new Church of England, and Roman Catholic style beliefs and superstitions persisted. It was seen as a place of Jesuits and illegal underground Catholics. The Protestant authorities in Lancashire were embarrassed by this.

"It is against this backdrop that Roger Nowell began his investigations in early 1612. The staunchly Protestant James VI and I had been on the throne of England for nine years and had a strong belief in witchcraft and magic. What better way to impress the king and put Lancashire on the map as somewhere that was engaging fully in the persecution of witches, than to stage a huge show trial using the most up-to-date witch-hunting techniques?"



NGEL FLOREY/SUE FLOWERS 2012 CREATED FOR THE LANCASHIRE WITCHES 400 PROJECT, GREEN CLOSE STUDIOS

"BY ADMITTING TO HAVING ENCOUNTERED EVIL SPIRITS, THE ACCUSED HAD EFFECTIVELY PLACED THEIR HEADS IN THE NOOSE"

VISIT

Lancaster Castle



Castle Parade, Lancaster LA1 1YJ

● lancastercastle.com

Telling tales

Another fascinating aspect of the trial is that most of the accusations of witchcraft actually came from children. Siblings, James and Jennet Device saw their mother, grandmother and sister taken into custody, and concocted a story about witchcraft in the family. In a bid to avoid being accused

themselves, the pair 'confessed' to a number of matters relating to witchcraft in the family. Nine-year-old Jennet, however, went a step further, and incriminated her older brother, James, who was arrested and tried alongside his mother and sister, Alison.

"Ultimately Jennet's accusations and the confessions of the alleged witches themselves saw 10 of those accused sentenced to hang, with another placed in the pillory," says Poole. "Many of the witches blamed wicked spirits for tempting them into revenge when they had been ill-treated – believing that this would exonerate them. But what most would not have known is that the witchcraft act had changed in 1604, making it illegal to have anything to do with any wicked or evil spirits. No matter how justified their actions may have been, by admitting to having even encountered evil spirits, the accused had effectively placed their heads in the noose."

Day of destiny

On 20 August 1612, eight women and two men were led slowly by cart to a location near what is now known as Williamson Park. Poignantly, with what was probably their first view of the sea, over Morecambe Bay, they were hanged.

"The events surrounding the Lancashire witch trials have traditionally been treated as an outbreak of witchcraft in 1612, but what we are actually seeing are long-standing accusations, which haven't been prosecuted until a political and religious reason was found," says Poole.

"The trial accounts, published in 1613 as *The Wonderfull Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancaster*, were dedicated to Sir Thomas Knyvet, who played a key role in thwarting the gunpowder plot in 1605. The claim in Lancashire was that a group of witches were planning to release the imprisoned witches by blowing up Lancaster Castle. This was Lancashire's own gunpowder plot, 'foiled' by good Protestant men who were using James VI and I's own techniques to rid the county of evil." ■



Historical advisor: Robert Poole (left), author of *The Wonderful Discovery of Witches in the County of Lancaster* (Carnegie, 2011)
Words: Charlotte Hodgman

Four of the condemned women meet their fate in this illustration from 2012, which commemorates the 400th anniversary of the Pendle witch trials

WITCHCRAFT: FIVE MORE PLACES TO EXPLORE

1 Brandeston village SUFFOLK Where witchfinder generals roamed

During the Civil War, witch-hunting gained momentum again, and self-appointed 'witchfinder generals' sprang up. The most notorious of these was Matthew Hopkins, who was responsible for one fifth of the total number of executions in England over the period. One target was John Lowes, vicar of Brandeston, who was 'swum' in the moat at Framlingham Castle and hanged in 1642. The castle is still open. brandeston.net

2 Exeter Castle DEVON Where English witches died

England's last executions for witchcraft took place in 1682 at Exeter Castle. Three women from Bideford were accused of using witchcraft against Grace Barnes, who subsequently became ill. Little of the original castle remains but a plaque near the gatehouse names Temperance Floyd, Mary Trembles and Susanna Edwards as the last to be executed in England for witchcraft. exetercastle.co.uk

3 Dornoch SUTHERLAND Where a witch was burned

The last execution for witchcraft in Britain took place in Dornoch in 1722, although the exact execution date is unknown. Janet Horne was supposedly stripped, covered in tar and paraded through Dornoch in a barrel before being burned. A 'Witch's Stone' south of the town's square is said to mark the site where Horne was burned. visitscotland.com

4 Sible Hedingham ESSEX Where a witch was 'swum'

The last recorded case of 'swimming' a witch (a popular way of trying witches after the repeal of the witchcraft statutes in 1736) took place in Sible Hedingham in 1863. The accused, a man named Dummy, was tied up and thrown into the brook (which still flows through the village) as an 'ordeal by water'. He later died of shock and pneumonia. siblehedingham.com

5 Tring HERTFORDSHIRE Where local justice ruled

In 1751, Ruth Osborne and her husband, John, were accused of witchcraft, dragged from their place of shelter in Tring Church and publicly ducked. Ruth later died; her inquest was held at the Half Moon pub, which still exists, as does the church. tring.gov.uk

15

The Norman conquest

Professor David Bates and Spencer Mizen visit **Norwich Castle** to discover how the people of England adapted to life under their new masters

It's hard to imagine the Norwich skyline without its great Norman keep. It's there – staring imposingly down on you from atop its lofty motte – when you step out into the city from its bus station. It's there as you pick your way through Norwich's market place, the so-called French borough. It's even there, in the middle distance, as you approach the city's other triumph of Norman architecture, Norwich Cathedral.

Today, the castle is a popular tourist destination, a fascinating symbol of Norwich's rich history. Yet, 900 or so years ago – as it was constructed, partly from massive Caen stones shipped across the Channel on behalf of England's new masters – it would have had many meanings to a local population reeling in the after-shock of regime change.

"From its foundations to the stones atop its battlements, Norwich Castle was about the projection of power," says Professor David Bates, professorial fellow at the University of East Anglia. "It's the new Norman regime saying to the people of Norwich: 'We're in charge now.'"

A fortification, probably a huge ring-work, had been constructed on the site by at least 1075 – we know this is true because it's recorded that year as being the epicentre of a rebellion against William the Conqueror, headed by one of his barons, Ralph de Gael, Earl of East Anglia.

By 1110, the original wooden building within the giant earthwork had been replaced by the stone structure that dominates the skyline today.

The size and scale of the castle is evident from any number of vantage points around the city. But it's perhaps not until you step inside the keep – which played host to William I's son Henry I over Christmas 1121 – that you get a true feel for what a huge impact this building would have had on Norwich's inhabitants. This cavernous space is filled with any number of treasures: among them a 900-year-old spiral staircase (which conveys you to the castle battlements, where you can take in magnificent views of the city), a Norman chapel, a well that's twice the depth of the keep, and a gloomy dungeon.

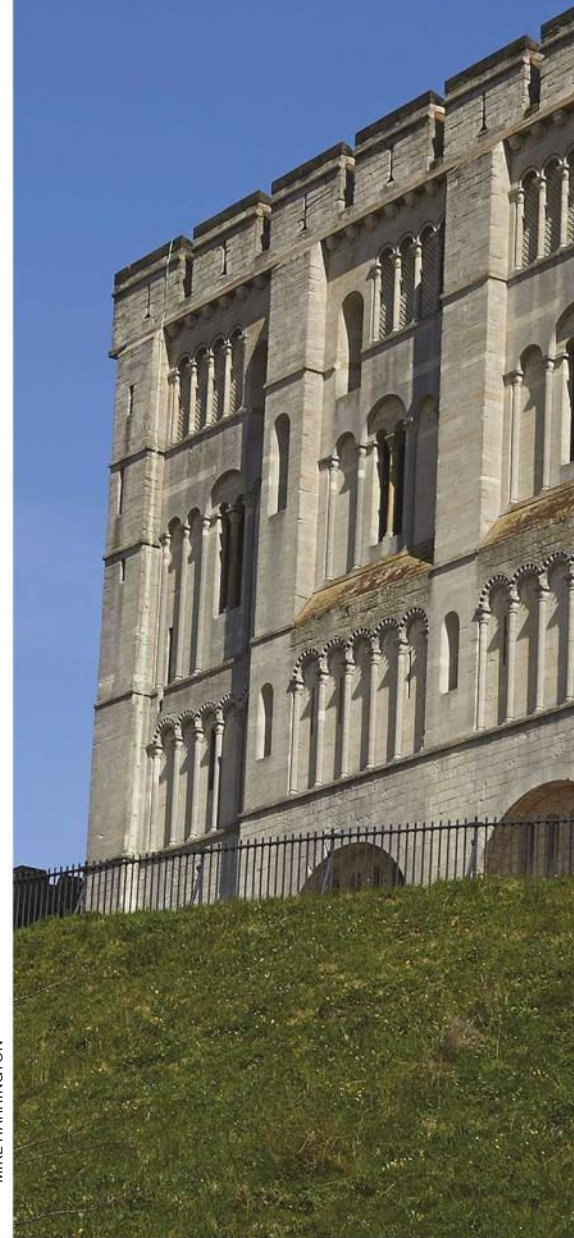
Perhaps most impressive of all is the Bigod arch, the original entrance to the keep. Art historian Sandy Heslop has described the arch as "one of the finest surviving entrances

to a secular building in Norman architecture". Yet, incorporating influences from Germany and the Iberian Peninsula, and taking its chief architectural inspiration from models on the river Loire, south of Normandy, it can be suggested that it's not culturally Norman at all. "It certainly offers us a clue to just what a multicultural place early 12th-century England was," says David Bates.

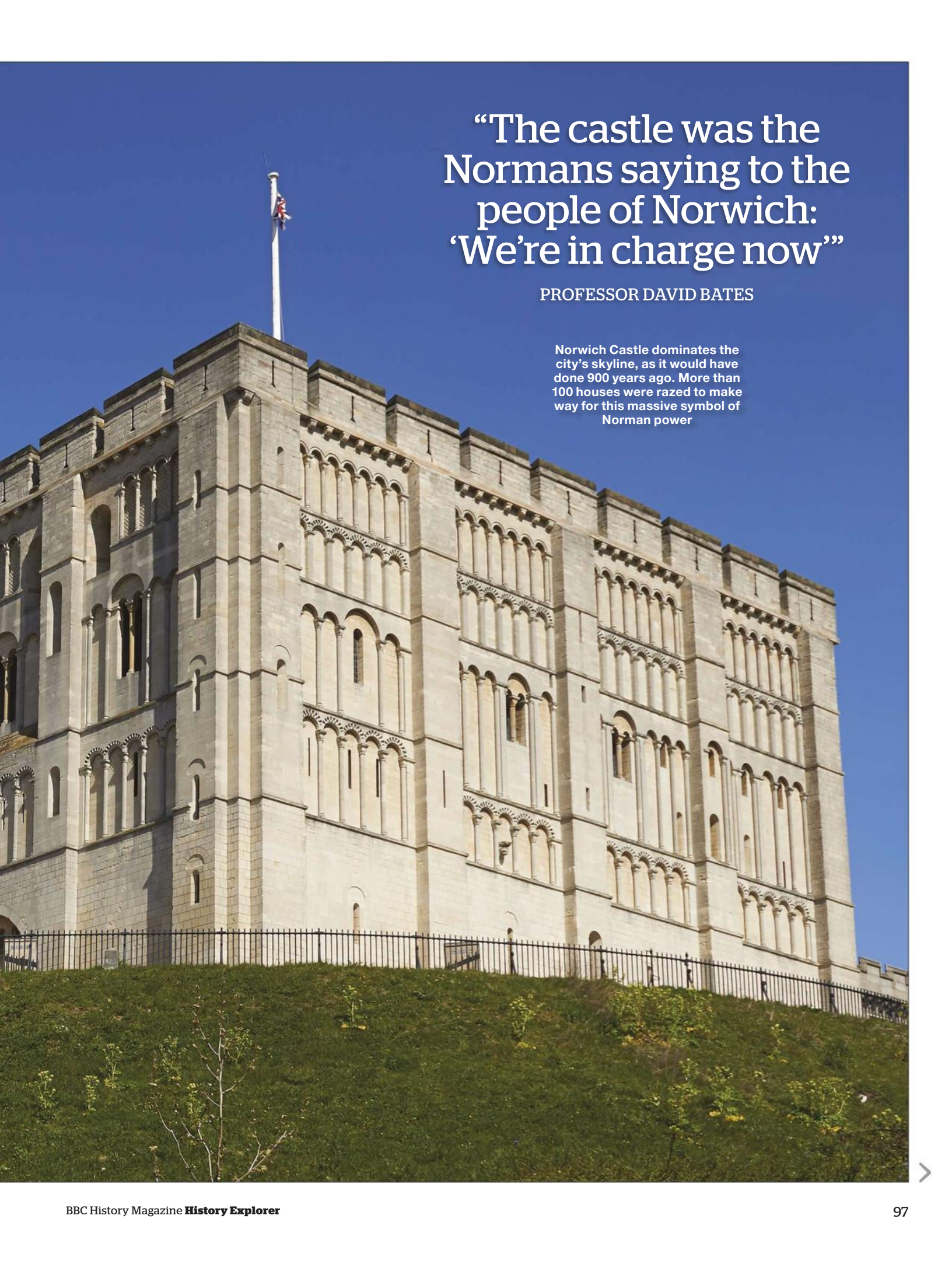
In the aftermath of his victory at Hastings, William and his followers built fortifications and installed garrisons in centres of strategic importance across his new kingdom – from Rochester in the south-east and Chepstow in the west to York in the north. But it wasn't until William's death, and a second generation of Norman rulers, that many of the great stone



A stained-glass window from the Norman chapel at Norwich Castle



MIKE HARRINGTON

A large, multi-story stone castle with many arched windows, situated on a grassy hill under a clear blue sky. A flagpole with a Union Jack flag is visible on the left side of the castle.

“The castle was the
Normans saying to the
people of Norwich:
‘We’re in charge now’”

PROFESSOR DAVID BATES

Norwich Castle dominates the city’s skyline, as it would have done 900 years ago. More than 100 houses were razed to make way for this massive symbol of Norman power



buildings that we can still see today began to appear – Norwich Castle among them.

“Norwich was an obvious location for a stone keep because, not only was it one of the kingdom’s great towns, it was right on the frontline in terms of potential threats to the Normans,” says David Bates. “A fleet sent by the Danish king Sven Estrithsson tried to force a landing here in 1069 and an earlier Danish king, Swein Forkbeard, sacked the town in 1004 in the process that led to his son Cnut becoming king of England and ruler of a North Sea empire. In these political circumstances, if there was going to be an attack, it was as likely as anywhere to be right here in Norwich.”

You can only imagine what the Anglo-Saxon residents of the town would have made of this enormous new building project right on their doorstep. Domesday Book mentions at least 100 houses being razed to make way for the castle. And if that wasn’t enough disruption, a French quarter, or ‘borough’, soon sprang up to the west of the keep, complete with 500 French settlers. Then, of course, there’s the contemporary Norwich Cathedral, just a few hundred metres to the north-east.

Epicscale

To say that Duke William of Normandy’s conquest of England was a traumatic event

in the country’s history is an understatement of huge proportions. Regime change took place on an epic scale – something that the historian John Gillingham has described as a takeover “unparalleled in European history”.

“By the time of Domesday Book in 1086,” says David Bates, “almost all the major landowners hail from Normandy and northern France. There’s barely an English tenant-in-chief to be seen.

“The transformation was also pretty brutal in the church. Within a few years of the invasion, the only English bishop still in his post was Wulfstan of Worcester but – and this is important to give us a broader perspective – bishops and abbots from regions of northern France were already being appointed in England *before* 1066. Indeed this interaction with the continent had been going on since the start of the conversion of the English to Christianity in the late sixth century.”

So why were the English sidelined so comprehensively in the wake of the Norman conquest? Part of the reason, argues David Bates, lies in the enormous gamble that William took in crossing the Channel in the first place. “The invasion of England was a hugely risky undertaking – failure could have had catastrophic consequences for William and his followers.

So, like all successful medieval kings, William had to offer rewards and also guarantees of security. This entailed defeating rebellions, granting lands and installing newcomers in places of strategic importance, such as Norwich.”

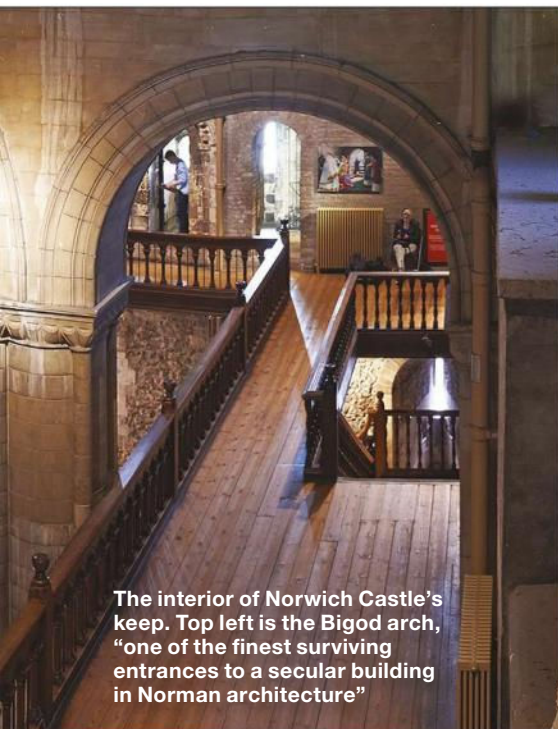
For Norwich’s new rulers, this meant assuming control of a prosperous city sat right in the pivot of the hugely lucrative North Sea trading network – somewhere that David Bates describes as a “crucible of opportunity”.

“There would have been a huge amount of turmoil and upheaval across England during the final decades of the 11th century – and

MIKE HARRINGTON



“CONQUERED AND CONQUERORS WOULD HAVE LEARNED TO LIVE SIDE BY SIDE - AND MANY PROSPERED FROM THE ARRANGEMENT”

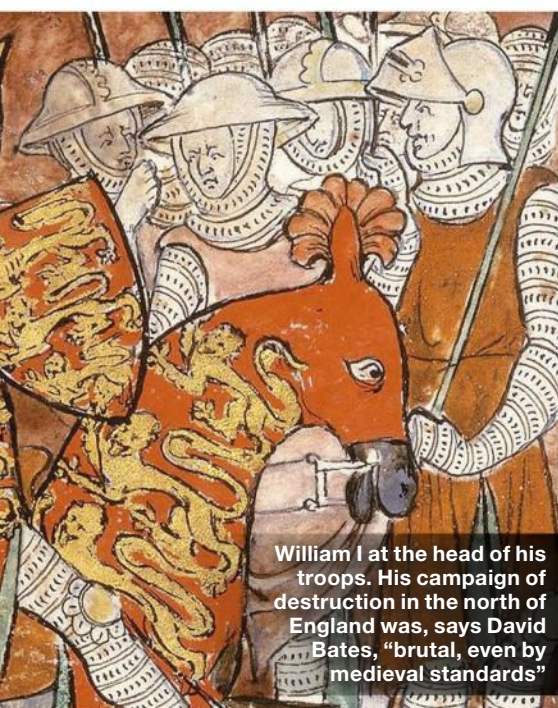


The interior of Norwich Castle's keep. Top left is the Bigod arch, "one of the finest surviving entrances to a secular building in Norman architecture"

many people won't have liked it," says Bates. "In Norwich, this seems to have translated into resentment, probably hostility, but interestingly no outright resistance is evident. In other areas, the story was, of course, different."

Social change

One such place was York, where hostility to the Norman takeover erupted into armed rebellion. William's response was swift, leading to the infamous campaign now known as the Harrying of the North. Across entire swathes of northern England, homes were torched, crops ruined and men, women



William I at the head of his troops. His campaign of destruction in the north of England was, says David Bates, "brutal, even by medieval standards"

VISIT

Norwich Castle



Castle Hill, Norwich NR1 3JU

● museums.norfolk.gov.uk

and children were put to death in a campaign of destruction that David Bates describes as "exceptionally brutal – even by medieval standards".

Yet for all the savagery and bloodshed of the years immediately after 1066, the Norman conquest isn't just a story of pain, subjugation and resentment. It is also one of human resilience.

"From the beginning, conquered and conquerors would have been learning to live side by side – and many of them would have prospered from the arrangement," says David Bates. "There are few better examples of this than Norwich, which was soon embarking on a period of prosperity and conspicuous consumption not yet seen in its history – and making some of its residents rich in the process."

Even the vast building projects to erect the city's castle and cathedral brought opportunity as well as upheaval, operating as huge job creation schemes for Norwich's residents.

And it's instructive, says David Bates, to think – when you gaze out across the city from the great keep's battlements – that your 12th-century predecessors would have seen parish churches dedicated to Breton, Scandinavian and northern English saints. "Yes, the Norman conquest of England was a story of power and domination. But it's also one of migration, multiculturalism and the mixing of peoples – phenomena that are at the heart of English identity." **H**



Historical advisor: Professor David Bates (left), historian and author. One of David's recent books is *The Normans and Empire* (OUP, 2013).

Words: Spencer Mizen

THE NORMAN CONQUEST FIVE MORE PLACES TO EXPLORE

1 The White Tower LONDON

Where William asserted his rule

The White Tower was William I's ultimate power statement. Begun on the edge of the largest city in his new kingdom, it was built to awe Londoners and to demonstrate authority. The stone keep was probably completed by 1100 – it remains the centrepiece of the Tower of London, Britain's most popular tourist attraction. hrp.org.uk/TowerOfLondon

2 Winchester Cathedral

Where Norman architecture wowed

Few Norman buildings can match Winchester Cathedral in terms of scale and beauty. In many ways, the building is typical of the Norman conquest: the old Anglo-Saxon minster was reduced to rubble and in its place, completed in 1093, appeared a building boasting the longest nave in Europe. But multiculturalism is present again – a major inspiration was the burial church of the Salian emperors, the cathedral of Speyer in Germany. winchester-cathedral.org.uk

3 The Bayeux Tapestry

Where William's victory is relived

The Bayeux Tapestry brings arguably the most celebrated battle in English history to glorious – and sometimes gory – life via nearly 70 metres of embroidered cloth. Despite its name, this depiction of Duke William's victory at Hastings was made in England in the 1070s, commissioned by William's half-brother, Odo, but reflecting English influences. tapisserie-bayeux.fr/la_tapisserie_de_bayeux.html

4 Chepstow Castle

Where England met Wales

Work on the site began a matter of months after the battle of Hastings – under the Conqueror's close friend William FitzOsbern – a testament to how the Normans immediately began to demonstrate their presence and authority. cadw.gov.wales

5 Dunfermline Abbey

Where Norman style is evident

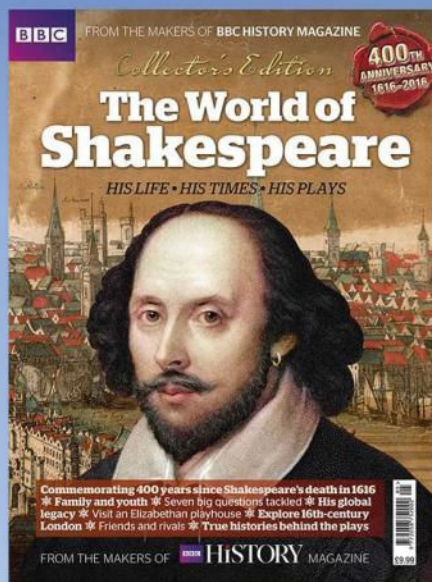
Founded by Edgar the Ætheling's sister St Margaret, the wife of King Malcolm (Mael Coluim) III, and developed by their son King David I, this magnificent building shows the architectural influence of the Norman conquest beyond the English kingdom's borders. dunfermlineabbey.co.uk/www

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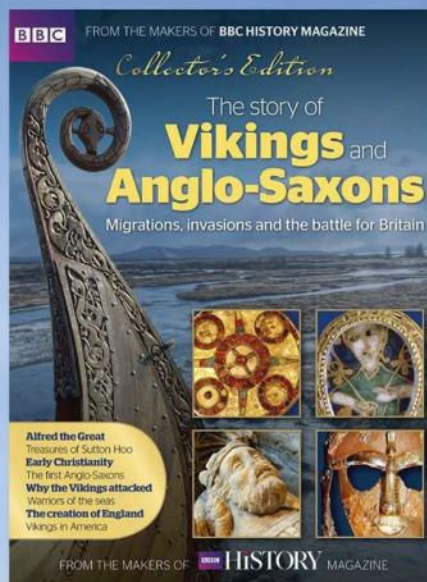
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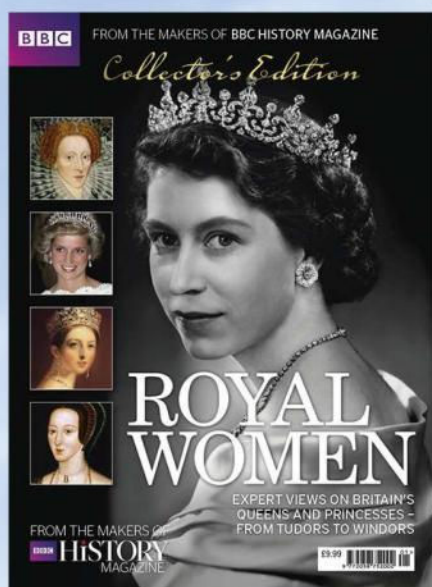
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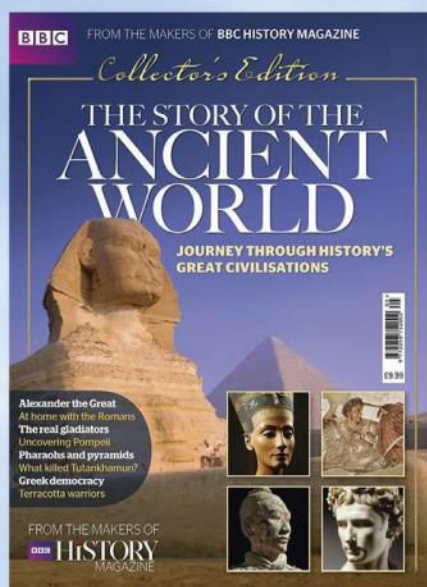
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